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ABSTRACT

This review describes the progress of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in addressing children's needs worldwide in the 10 years since the International Year of the Child in 1979. Specific aims of the study were: (1) to review major NGO initiatives for children, especially initiatives involving interaction with the United Nations, during the past decade; and (2) to place that review against the background of what has actually happened to children around the world in that decade. A brief foreword and preface are followed by 11 chapters which focus on: (1) trends; (2) the rights of the child and the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (3) child labor; (4) refugee children; (5) street children; (6) children in war and peace; (7) children with disabilities; (8) health; (9) education; (10) participation of children in broad social mobilization for general socioeconomic development projects; and (11) the bottom line, an overview both of the harsh realities of the decade just past and the signs of progress that nevertheless emerged from it. Appendices provide lists of people interviewed, organizations providing documentation, and acronyms. (RH)

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What's happened to children and people who work for children in the ten years since the International Year of the Child

by
Patricia Smyke

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A review of NGO/UN action for children 1979 – 1989
commissioned by the NGO Committee on UNICEF

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Caught in the

CROSS CURRENTS

What's happened to children
— and people who work for children—
in the ten years since the International Year of the Child

by Patricia Smyke

A review of NGO / UN action for children 1979—1989
commissioned by the NGO Committee on UNICEF

On the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Child, the NGO Committee on UNICEF is pleased to present this review of NGO/UN action for children over the past decade. We hope it will be useful to a wide audience by stimulating discussion on what has been accomplished for children in the past ten years and on what our priorities ought to be for the decade to come.

The NGO Committee wishes to express its thanks to UNICEF for the support that made this review possible.

Michael S. Gerber
President, NGO Committee on UNICEF

Table of contents

Foreword iii

Preface iv

Chapter 1—Trends 1

Chapter 2—The Rights of the Child and the Convention 7

Chapter 3—Child Labour 13

Chapter 4—Refugee Children 19

Chapter 5—Street Children 24

Chapter 6—Children in War, Children in Peace 28

Chapter 7—Children with Disabilities 33

Chapter 8—Health 38

Chapter 9—Education 45

Chapter 10—Participation of Children 50

Chapter 11—The Bottom Line 53

Appendices:
1) List of People Interviewed 58
2) List of Organizations providing Documentation 59
3) List of Acronyms 60

Notes 61

Foreword

WE ARE FORTUNATE that Patricia Smyke has agreed to carry out this review. She was the 'brain' of the Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations for the International Year of the Child (NGO/IYC Committee). She knew perfectly the situation of children in 1979 and in the years leading up to the International Year. She has herself consistently followed the evolution since 1979 and has had access to most reliable sources in her search for information.

In this review she describes and analyses both facts and trends with her usual sharp insight. The reader will have to conclude that the picture of childhood worldwide today is unfortunately not all that bright. It appears from the present study that real progress has been made in fields that are well identified, with which we have been familiar for several years and for which it has been possible to build up articulated strategies.

Progress can be seen in matters such as advocacy and awareness raising, scientific—especially medical—knowledge, implementation of inexpensive basic health methods, gathering of information, adoption of new laws at the national level and juridical instruments at the international level, and creation of new child-oriented centres, institutions or organizations.

However, it is undeniable that there are negative aspects: some existing adverse elements (e.g. wars) have dramatically increased in developing countries, and phenomena that were less important—or at least less identified—in the mid-seventies (e.g. drug addiction among youngsters) seem to be "galloping out of control". To be short: progress in well known or at least foreseen areas, bewilderment vis à vis some new, more or less unexpected situations.

About the future, the conclusion one may draw from the review seems to be that it can be neither foreseen nor planned in detail, at least not as far as the long term is concerned. What we have to do is, on the one hand, work with flexible strategies that can quickly adapt themselves to new situations and on the other hand go on working stubbornly in the fundamental fields such as health, education and rights, which remain *"conditiones sine qua non"* for all development and consequently for the well-being of the child. The difficulties that have been identified are surely not a reason to diminish our commitment to the cause of the child.

If NGOs can act in this way in cooperation with the United Nations System and Governments we shall in 1999 be even more convinced of the usefulness of IYC than we are now. ♦

Joseph Moerman
President of the NGO/IYC Committee
(1977—1980)

Preface

1989 —a year of important anniversaries for children—birthday cakes and candles everywhere.

The *UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child* was adopted 30 years ago, the *Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child* 65 years ago. The Anti-Slavery Society (now called the Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights) observes its 150th birthday this year.

In 1989 we may also celebrate, not the birthday but the birth, of a *Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

Tenth anniversaries abound: The International Year of the Child is ten years past. Defence for Children International (DCI) is celebrating the 10th Anniversary of its founding. So are the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), and the Child-to-Child movement.

But 1989 marks other, less happy, tenth anniversaries. Perhaps this year people who care about the welfare of children should be lighting candles—no, bonfires—to remind the world of these anniversaries:

...For the "boat people", the Cambodians, and the Afghans who fled their homes in 1979, it is ten years that they have been waiting in refugee camps. Some of those who were children in 1979 have children of their own now, children who know no home but a camp, no other way of life but life in exile.

...It was in 1979 that a group of Chileans concerned about children found it necessary to create an organization known as PIDEE. Translated from the Spanish that means roughly "Protection of Children Damaged by States of Emergency."

...In 1979 an organization called A.T.D. Fourth World burst upon the international scene and compelled an obstinately blind world to look at the most widespread and intolerable human rights violation of all: the millions of children and families locked in extreme poverty. The world has never been allowed to look away since, but the processes of exploitation and exclusion continue.

IYC + 10

The NGO Committee on UNICEF believes that a tenth anniversary is a good time for stock-taking. What have we accomplished for children in the ten years since IYC, when the world renewed its pledge to give to children "the best we have to give"?

To find out, the Committee commissioned this IYC + 10 study, which has two objectives:

1) To review major NGO initiatives for children over the past decade, especially those involving interaction with the United Nations system.

2) To put that review against the background of what has actually happened to children around the world in this decade.

To meet those two objectives it is necessary to ask a series of frustratingly broad questions:

For the first objective — What are NGOs doing for children, and how? How do they work with each other and with the UN? Have there been changes over the decade in the ways of working, or in the organizations and people involved?

For the second objective — In what ways has the situation of children improved over the last ten years, and in what ways has it deteriorated? For which children, where? In what fields have we made progress, where have there been setbacks?

Definitive answers to such questions do not come from one 4-month study. It is hoped, nevertheless, that what is presented here

will stimulate the reflection and discussion that will move us closer to some answers...close enough at least to see more clearly where we ought to be headed in the next decade's action for children and beyond.

How the study was carried out

To gather material for this report the author interviewed more than 70 people from non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, and institutions and professions serving children. They are people who know the work of NGOs and the UN system. Some have a special knowledge of children in one country or region. Others are experts on particular aspects of childhood. Many are parents.

The interviewees included, insofar as possible, people from all age groups and from all regions of the world. One could not pretend of course that they form a "representative sample" in any statistical sense. The pages that follow do represent, nonetheless, a distillation of the opinions and observations of thoughtful, well-informed and experienced people who know a lot about children, children's issues and the organizations that work for children.

In addition to the interviews, the author reviewed scores of documents provided by NGOs and UN organs, as well as publications on children coming from a variety of other sources, from the popular press to specialized journals.

What this report is not

This report does not pretend to cover local and national NGO initiatives for children. Ideally, a review of the ten years since IYC should highlight action for children at the local and national levels, with international developments as background. However, given the limitations of time and money for this study, comprehensive coverage of that kind was impossible. It is hoped that the few examples mentioned here will give some idea of the indispensable role of local people and organizations and will indicate the interplay between activities at the local, national and international levels.

This report is not an evaluation of the IYC or its follow-up. Where people or organizations have indicated that there is a link between IYC and what they are doing today, that relationship is noted. Where interviewees have said that they think IYC had such and such effect, that is reported. But to establish the kind of long-term cause and effect relationships that would be required for an evaluation of an international year is quite beyond the scope of this study, if indeed it would be possible for any study.

Similarly, it was not the intention of the NGO Committee on UNICEF to put together a compendium of NGO activity for children in the years 1979-1989, but rather to do an analytical review of such activity. In order to organize this short report coherently, it was necessary to be painfully selective. For every NGO project used here as an example, dozens of others, equally noteworthy, could have been mentioned.

In choosing the themes to be treated it was again necessary to concentrate on a few fields that typify NGO activities for children over the past decade, or that illustrate new or lesser known ways of working. Other fields of action and concern could equally well have been featured—additional health and education issues, cultural discrimination, problems of migrant children, intercountry adoption, sexual exploitation, trafficking and sale of children, deprivation of liberty, torture—the list of problems confronting children is almost unbearably long. The omission of any field in this review is in no way a judgement about its relative importance for children or the significance of the work being done in that field.

Certain themes, of course, appear in all the chapters, such as the universal penalization of the children of the poor and the need to give substance to our words about "prior-

ity to the poorest". The critical relationship between women and children is another theme that readers should have in mind in every chapter, even if it is not explicitly restated each time.

What this report is

Just as the International Year of the Child engaged the entire UN system, the IYC + 10 study was meant to review the full gamut of NGO and UN activities affecting children. Although commissioned by the NGO Committee on UNICEF, the study looks at child-related NGO initiatives throughout the UN system.

Chapter 1 of this report analyses broad trends in NGO and UN action for children since 1979. Chapters 2 through 9 illustrate those trends as they appear in eight different spheres of activity where non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations collaborate in their work for children. Chapter 10 looks at the participation of children in all this activity that is focused, after all, on their lives. Chapter 11 is an attempt to draw up a balance sheet for the decade.

The appendices list the people and organizations who made the study possible by giving of their time and expertise in interviews, by sending thoughtful and comprehensive written replies to the author's impossible questions, and by sharing with her their rich documentation on children.

Acknowledgements

The NGO Committee on UNICEF wishes to express its gratitude to all who have contributed to this study and to those who will follow up on it, first by dissemination and debate of the material presented here, and then by taking further action for children.

The author would like to thank the NGO Committee on UNICEF for the opportunity to take part in this unique exercise. She is most grateful to all the people and organizations who made it such a rewarding experience. The study would have been impossible without the cooperation of named and unnamed colleagues throughout the NGO and UN communities who went to great effort to find or put together the kind of information requested.

The author's only regret is that there was so much excellent material that could not be incorporated explicitly in this report. If there is value in the synthesis and conclusions, a hundred contributors must be credited. For errors of fact or judgement, and for the ruthless selectivity, the author alone is responsible.

The author is indebted to those who have read and commented on the draft and to friends and family who have helped in more ways than they know... sparking ideas, suggesting leads, offering practical advice and assistance at crucial moments. Special mention is due to Defence for Children International, to the International Catholic Child Bureau, to the unfailingly helpful UNICEF staff in Geneva and New York, and to the officers and Board of the NGO Committee on UNICEF. ♦

Patricia Smyke
March 1989

CHAPTER 1 Trends

"Before, if you wanted to accomplish something for children, you had to get an appointment with the wife of the President. Now you go to see the Minister of Planning and Development."

—From an interview

A Dickensian garret in London, an editor's office in Islamabad, a storefront in lower Manhattan, a parliamentary committee room in Tunis, a dirt-poor settlement on the outskirts of Paris, a corporate headquarters in Abidjan, a crossroads village in Burkina Faso, a tea-shop in Bombay, a youth camp in Mongolia, a research centre in the Zambezi Valley, a classroom in northeast Brazil, the marbled halls or cramped offices of UN buildings—these are the places where you find people who are working for children in 1989.

The diversity that was apparent at the end of the IYC has been confirmed and expanded in the years since. This makes it difficult to generalize about NGOs and children, but many of the contributors to the IYC + 10 study feel that certain trends are discernible...

Getting children on the right agenda—the international strategy

There is considerable evidence that NGOs are becoming more adept at *"making the system work for children and not against them"*. Some NGO representatives described their strategies for getting action on a particular children's issue in the UN. This is a composite of those strategies:

1) Have a clear understanding of what can and can not be done on the issue by the UN; have a clear objective.

2) Do your homework. Gather reliable information from several countries or sources, original information that would not be available elsewhere. Be sure you are credible.

3) Get the information into the international community. Get governments interested, starting with those most likely to be sympathetic. Get them to work on each other.

4) Get the issue on the right agenda. Be sure it is discussed in the right forum and a decision taken or a resolution adopted.

5) Get other relevant UN agencies involved. Have them look at their obligations in the matter.

   Part of this step is to identify and lobby sympathetic or key people within agencies. Judging from the interviews in this study, some UN staff members applaud—secretly or openly—this

nudging they get from NGOs on children's issues. It strengthens their hand if they want to argue for change within the organization. Other UN staff members find the NGOs, or at least some of them, too assertive and insensitive to the constraints under which UN bodies must operate.

6) Identify concerned groups in the countries where the issue is relevant and support them in information gathering and advocacy. Ask them to have the issue considered in connection with economic or social planning, using the international action to press for national action and vice versa.

Some examples of this strategy, or variants of it, are described in the later chapters of this report.

National strategies

Parallel strategies are in use at the national level, where NGOs have been quite successful at lobbying on behalf of children, both for children in their own country and for support to international programmes for children. The Children's Legal Centre in London, an outgrowth of the IYC, gathers and disseminates information on law and policy affecting children in England and Wales. It is credited with having influenced several important pieces of legislation on children.

If the U.S. foreign aid legislation now includes a sizable appropriation for child survival activities, it is largely due to a group of NGOs who turned "child survival" and "GOBI" into household words for Washington legislators. They did it by direct contacts in the capitol and by getting constituents back home to contact their Congressmen about these issues.

These NGO strategies at the national and international level have been part of a larger movement to create what is currently called "political will". NGOs have contributed to and been strengthened by more general efforts to persuade political leaders and decision-makers to give greater priority to children. The work of the Global Committee of Parliamentarians on Population and Development has been significant in this regard.

Working with other NGOs

The effectiveness of NGO "ad hoc" groups has been one of the striking features of this decade. These groups have come together out of a perceived need to work together on a specific task, such as the NGO input into the Convention on the Rights of the Child, described in the next chapter. The ad hoc groups have often operated with disarming informality and the loosest kind of structure, but with an admirable, self-imposed discipline. That has enabled them to concentrate their energies on the task at hand, to benefit as a group from the expertise that members provide on different topics, and to speak with one voice in crucial debates.

NGO groups have been created around many issues: the NGO Group on the Fourth World, the NGO Committee on Narcotics and Substance Abuse, the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Crimi-

nal Justice, the International Council on Disability (formerly CWOIH). The structure and working methods of each group are different, but the achievements are impressive in terms of stimulating action on issues that are important for children.

NGOs also work together, of course, in larger, more formal structures like the Conference of NGOs at ECOSOC (CONGO), the Standing Committee of NGOs at UNESCO and the NGO Committee on UNICEF. Some observers think that NGOs working for children are becoming less attached to their long-term relationship with a specific UN agency and are putting more emphasis on how they can do something on a particular issue or for a particular group of children.

Inevitably, there have also been failed attempts at NGOs working with each other. Task forces, consortia and ad hoc groups have come and gone throughout the decade. The problems mentioned were lack of money, personnel or "will" to support adequate information exchange and communication; problems of "territoriality"; and competition for material resources, visibility or credit.

The ambiance for children and NGOs in the 1980s

In late 1986 the *Cultural Survival Quarterly* prepared a special issue on children, calling it "Children: the Battleground of Change". It is an apt phrase to describe the ambiance of the '80s. NGOs and UN bodies alike are carrying out their work in an era when every advance for children is met by an opposing force threatening to undo it. Trends and counter-trends show up and are played out in the lives of children.

A West African doctor commented, for example, *"Twenty years ago, the majority of African parents did not know what to do to keep their children healthy. But PHC and health education and more education in general—that has made a difference. Today parents know what to do for their children, but now they don't have the means to do it. The economic recession, war and political instablity—these forces keep people from doing that they would like to do for their children."* Some people mentioned other major obstacles to progress for children: rapid population growth and a deteriorating environment.

Some developments of the past decade, however, have contributed to a more positive ambiance for NGOs working for children:

- There is a much greater awareness of the needs and rights of children. If there was one point on which all the contributors to this study agreed, it was this one.
- Children have become a 'legitimate' object of serious study in a wider array of disciplines. Earlier, specialists on children's issues came mainly from the fields of health, education and social welfare. Today we have people specializing on children's issues in law, economics, trade unionism, anthropology and sociology, environmental studies, and in the media.
- Children are now a recognized element in the development equation. There is a growing understanding that they have to be factored in on both sides of the equation—as contributors and beneficiaries, as a target for investment and the source of long-term returns.

The climate for NGOs has changed, too. Although not all NGOs are happy with his way of putting it, one writer describes the change this way: NGOs have been *"catapulted into international respectability"*. [1]

- Some of the development assistance money that would have gone through bilateral or multilateral channels ten years ago is chanelled now through NGOs. One would like to think that the "NGO option" gets more consideration now because there is greater appreciation of the qualities they can bring to development work; but there are surely other aspects too: disappointment with the results of two decades of inter-governmental development efforts, and the hope that NGOs can somehow be more effective on a lower budget.

"In recent years," said one interviewee, "the UN and the NGO community have been able to draw strength from each other on children's issues, each doing what it does best."

- NGOs find it possible now to be more meaningfully involved in discussions of policy and in the planning of action for children. Several interviewees felt that in some agencies at least there is less lip service given to NGOs and more genuine involvement. (The charge of lip service always needs clarification. It is justified in some cases, but it may also arise from unrealistic expectations on the part of NGOs.) Others spoke of a heightened two-way respect and understanding between NGOs and UN agencies as they get more experience in working together.

- Most NGOs working for children cooperate with two or three different organizations within the UN system. They are becoming quite discerning as to where and how their collaboration with the UN will be most productive for children. *"In recent years,"* said one interviewee, *"the UN and the NGO community have been able to draw strength from each other on children's issues, each doing what it does best."*

- The relationship between "northern NGOs" and "southern NGOs" is changing in ways that will have a profound effect on programming for children. As one interviewee put it, *"The southern NGOs have made it very clear that the role of northern NGOs is to stay home and create awareness in their own countries, create conditions that will allow the South and southern NGOs to get on with what they know very well how to do."*

  Another interviewee, thinking about NGO priorities for the future, said *"NGOs based in the North should not provide direct services for children in other countries by running projects. They should just support groups in the country to do it themselves...It will be more difficult to raise funds for this, but it is vital."*

Continuity and change in NGO initiatives for children

Some observations about the ways NGOs work for children now as compared to ten years ago:

- Children's issues have become human rights issues. Many problems that were approached earlier as "welfare issues" are viewed now as violations of the basic rights all human beings should enjoy, including children. Some interviewees, however, saw a certain danger in an exaggerated use of the rights approach for every issue surrounding children, fearing that it dilutes the concept of 'rights'.

"People used to say, 'it has always been like that, there is nothing we can do'. Now we have proof that that is not so."

—From an interview

- As in 1979, concern for the family is a recurring theme for NGOs, but there is a more urgent note to their discussions on it now. Documents and interviews, NGO and UN sources alike, stress the need to view children always in the context of family and community and to reach children through programmes that strengthen the family and prevent its disintegration. The frequency and universality of this theme seem to reflect a deep concern for the well-being of families in all regions of the world. (See Chapter 11.)
- NGOs are losing their fear of being "political". In 1979 NGOs individually and collectively insisted a great deal on the apolitical nature of their work for children. One doesn't hear that so much anymore. One hears instead talk of political will, political strategies, and the uses of power. Many interviewees pointed out that the fundamental causes of children's problems are political and that that is the arena where NGOs must work for solutions.
- In 1979 people frequently said that they could not get children on the political agenda because "children don't vote". There was flawed logic in that statement even then. Children may not vote, but people who care about children do, and because such people are more aware and articulate today, they form a constituency that few political leaders can ignore.
- People working for children are less timid about taking on "the big issues". When IYC discussions would come round to the conclusion that children's problems were embedded in poverty, or underdevelopment, or war, there was sometimes a tendency to shrug and say, "...but that is another issue." The implication: it's an issue for someone else to deal with while we get back to our work for children.

  But today there is a greater readiness to address root causes, no matter how intransigent. Poverty is a children's issue, war is a children's issue, and many of those who are working for children feel they must try to take action on these issues. Again there were voices cautioning against taking this attitude to extremes: "If everything becomes a children's issue, our work loses its focus and probably its effectiveness."

If children are caught in the cross currents of conflicting tendencies, so are the people working for children. There is a good deal of organizational soul-searching going on. Often staff members in both NGOs and UN agencies expressed ideas considerably more advanced than, or different from, the public positions and statements of their organizations. They spoke of the "dialogue", the "tension" or the "struggle" going on within their organization to find its proper role and ways of working.

Sometimes this centres on the question of projects in other countries and the degree of local participation and control. Sometimes one senses a debate between technical or programme people and those responsible for information and fundraising; or between the service providers and those who would like to concentrate more on information and advocacy.

There is a certain ambivalence about fund-raising. Several NGOs contributing to this study were anxious not to be known as "just fund raisers". Yet NGOs are formidable fund raisers, whether for the programmes of their own organization or for the work of other agencies. It is impossible to get a figure for all the funds raised by NGOs for children, but it is estimated to be in the billions of dollars.

- Just one example among hundreds: the Girl Guides in the United Kingdom raised £ 115,000 in an International Youth Year project to support primary health care and water projects in Sri Lanka and to help train Scouts and Guides there for community development work.
- The World Health Organization estimates that about US$ 200 million is transferred by NGOs each year for rehabilitation programmes for the disabled in developing countries. That is privately raised money, not funding through bilateral or multilateral agencies.
- NGOs continue to be the mainstay of the UNICEF Greeting Card Operation. The range of NGOs involved has widened considerably over the past decade to include not only the NGOs who have traditionally done this, such as the United Nations Associations, but organizations of travel agents, hotels, architects, etc.

Regional and country differences

There is an important caveat to be noted here: global generalizations about children—and there are many in this report—obscure the great differences between regions, between countries within a region, and between different sectors of the population within any given country.

Economic growth, for example, has been greater in Asia than in Africa. The debt burden is heavier for some countries than for others. Sociopolitical conditions vary. Demographic factors differ (e.g. population growth rates and the rate of urban migration). All of these have an impact on what is happening to children. Such variations can not be spelled out in detail in a synthesis of this sort, but the reader is asked to bear them in mind.

Cross currents

One could conclude, rightly, at the end of this decade that there are many favourable currents helping to advance NGO/UN action for children. Yet this is certainly no time to rest on our oars. As later chapters will show, the counter currents are strong.

CHAPTER 2

The Rights of the Child and the Convention

"'Rights of the Child'...as preparations for the International Year of the Child reach their peak, few phrases are used as often or as loosely as that one."

—NGO/IYC Committee, December 1978 [1]

As early as 1973 the term "children's rights" was described as "a slogan in search of definition". [2] *Perhaps the single most important development for children in the last decade is the progress that has been made towards a more precise definition of their rights.*

Many interviewees commented on the spread of the "human rights" approach to children's issues, as opposed to or in combination with, the "welfare" approach. Some feel that this process was set in motion by the IYC, which provoked many groups to explore rights-related issues for children.

Other interviewees focused more directly on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, describing it as a development of "unprecedented significance". Assuming its adoption and ratification, many people named it as the achievement of the 1980s that will have the greatest long-term impact on children. For this study it is important both for what it represents in itself and for the process that brought it to its present state. One interviewee described the NGO role in that process as "a small miracle".

The making of a Convention

The UN Working Group on the Question of a Convention on the Rights of the Child was set up in 1979 by the Commission on Human Rights after the Polish Government had proposed a Convention in 1978. NGOs attended the Working Group from the beginning, but progress on the draft was slow and the participation of governments rather disappointing, especially since there were so few representatives from the Third World, where the overwhelming majority of the world's children live.

There were many ideas among the NGOs in those early years as to what should be in the Convention, and individual NGOs made many interventions. However, as one of them recalls, *"NGOs were not together, everyone was getting up and going in all directions."*

It was at that point, in 1983, that three NGOs (Defence for Children International, the International Catholic Child Bureau and Rädda Barnen) took the initiative to call together the dozen or so NGOs that had been attending the UN Working Group meetings. These NGOs decided to set up the "Informal NGO Ad Hoc Group on the Drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child". Defence for Children (DCI) agreed to act as the secretariat for the Group.

The Informal NGO Ad Hoc Group on the Drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child—the only traditional thing about it was the length of its title.

The Ad Hoc Group was created for a specific purpose, and it is time-limited. It has managed to provide a forum for free discussion of the issues among NGOs, but once the Group has arrived at a consensus there has been little public dissent.

The Ad Hoc Group decided their first year to present a written report at the next session of the UN Working Group. The product of animated NGO discussions, it offered a critique of the existing draft text and put forth new proposals. It was well-written and well presented ("on good quality paper" as one member of the group pointedly remarked). It won them the respect of governmental delegates, which has increased over the years.

Membership in the Ad Hoc Group has increased so that there are now 30-40 NGOs involved. Representatives of UNICEF and the ICRC take part in the meetings as observers, and UNICEF has provided logistical and other assistance to the Group. A great deal of professional expertise on children is assembled when the Group meets, as well as legal expertise.

The Ad Hoc NGO Group has often been consulted on specific issues and proposals, or asked to get background information for new arrivals. Representatives of the Group have been included in the UN drafting committees on various articles, with many of their suggestions incorporated in the text. The Group has organized well-attended briefings for the diplomatic missions in Geneva before sessions of the UN Working Group.

In addition to this participation in the drafting process, other NGO initiatives have helped to make the Convention known to a wider public and rallied support for it:

- Innumerable NGOs have given the Draft Convention extensive coverage in their publications and at meetings and have circulated the "latest version" so their members could study it and react.
- DCI-USA and the Columbia University Project on Children and War asked human rights lawyers and legal scholars to write brief comments on certain aspects of the Draft Convention. They published this collection of essays as an *Independent Commentary on the draft Convention on the Rights of the Child.* Copies were sent to all members of the UN Working Group and to other interested parties.
- A "Briefing Kit" on the Convention was prepared as a joint project of UNICEF and DCI. It was in such demand that its first two editions "sold out".
- Rädda Barnen International published a compendium of UN references to the Convention that was used by many UN and government officials.
- NGOs have made presentations to legal associations, teacher organizations, women's groups, church groups and leaders of youth movements to sensitize them to the issues at stake.
- The most interested parties of all—children—have not been forgotten. Foster Parents Plan International and DCI-USA have pre-

pared an attractive booklet called *In the Child's Best Interest* that presents the different articles of the Convention in language and pictures that children can understand.

- National Committees for UNICEF have been active in stimulating interest in the Convention. The Italian National Committee for UNICEF, the NGO Committee on UNICEF and the NGO Ad Hoc Group organized a meeting in Lignano, Italy, in 1987 to promote involvement in the ratification and monitoring of the Convention following adoption.
- In November 1988, UNICEF-UK, the Children's Legal Centre and the UK section of DCI hosted a conference in London for over 100 national organizations. Another Conference on the Convention, for youth aged 15-18, will take place in April 1989 in the U.K. Other National Committees have prepared information materials on the Convention and are planning events this year to make it better known to the general public.
- The Convention has been on the agenda of a score of inter-governmental and NGO regional meetings held throughout 1987 and 1988 in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and North America.

In a statement to the 1989 session of the Commission on Human Rights, the spokesman for the NGO Ad Hoc Group called the NGO awareness activities on the Convention *"unprecedented in terms of the creation of an actively receptive climate for an international instrument still on the drawing board."*

"It is unlikely that any government or NGO could say that it is entirely happy with the draft as it stands....[but] if the present draft of the Convention reflects the standards of child welfare and protection that the representatives of the world's population believe to be just and feasible in 1989, so be it....Whilst there will always be some level of discontent, and certain improvements to be made in the quest for perfection, there must be a decision at some point to stop formulation and begin implementation. We believe that time has now come."

—Statement to the 1989 session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, signed by 32 NGOs

Within the UN system, meantime, the UNICEF Executive Board at its 1986 session adopted a resolution urging that the drafting of the Convention be concluded without further delay and requesting UNICEF to participate in that work. UNICEF, which had for some time been facilitating the work of the NGO Ad Hoc Group, now began to take a more active role itself. UNICEF organized two informal Consultations in Geneva for government delegates just prior to the UN Working Group sessions. UNICEF also engaged a specialist on children's legal issues to comment on the draft text and prepare a paper to assist the UN Working Group in its analysis of the Technical Review. Other UN agencies (in addition of course to the Commission on Human Rights) have taken part in some phases of the drafting of the Convention: UNHCR, UNESCO, ILO, WHO and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

As this report is written the fate of the Convention is not yet clear, but there is reason to hope that it will be adopted as "targeted" at the UN General Assembly session in the autumn of 1989. A statement to the 1989 session of the Commission on Human Rights signed by 32 NGOs sums up their position as follows:

"It is unlikely that any government or NGO could say that it is entirely happy with the draft as it stands....[but] if the present draft of the Convention reflects the standards of child welfare and protection that the representatives of the world's population believe to be just and feasible in 1989, so be it....Whilst there will always be some level of discontent, and certain improvements to be made in the quest for perfection, there must be a decision at some point to

stop formulation and begin implementation. We believe that time has now come."

The Convention as rallying point

Even before the Convention goes into effect, the drafting process has had an amazing impact:

- The drafting of the Convention has served as a rallying point for NGOs interested in all the different aspects of children's lives. No other structure or development has done that—no other grouping has been that broad in scope—since the NGO/IYC Committee.
- Worldwide, in the NGO community, in governments and in the UN system, it has forced people to examine and debate children's rights with a precision that did not exist ten years ago.
- The NGO Ad Hoc Group has provided NGOs with a model for effective cooperation with each other and with their UN partners.
- The discussions on the Convention have produced a "ripple effect" already in the UN system. A UNHCR staff member made that observation in relation to his own organization. He was referring not only to the article on refugee children, but to all the articles. UNHCR staff have been asking, how do these different rights come up in refugee situations?
- The work on the Convention has stimulated the production of excellent information materials on children's rights, written and audio-visual.

Other work on children's rights

The drama of the Convention tends to obscure other events in the field of children's rights during the past decade, but there have been other important and far-reaching developments that should be recognized:

- The creation at the international level of an organization specifically oriented towards advocacy and action on child-related human rights issues: Defence for Children International. Its encouragement for national sections, its investigations, its publications, its monitoring function, its work for improved international standards, its interventions on cases that could not be solved at the national level—for all these reasons DCI has been a major influence on action for children since 1979.
- At the national level there are many more institutions and organizations looking out for the rights of children. It is important that these groups are spreading and growing both in industrialized and developing countries. Some of them concentrate on law, policy, research and advocacy, and mobilizing public opinion. Others offer direct aid and legal assistance to particular groups of children such as asylum seekers and refugees, children of migrants, young people and families dealing with juvenile justice systems, children in prison, children imprisoned with their mothers, etc.

- The decade has seen the growth of several regional and international networks concerned with children's rights: ANPPCAN (the African Network on Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect); ISPCAN (the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect); LAWASIA, an organization concerned with all aspects of the legal world in Asia and the Pacific, which has been increasingly active on children's issues.
- NGOs, national and international, have been in the vanguard on issues like child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, exploitation of children for prostitution and child pornography, abduction of children, and trafficking in children. Problems that were once hidden are out in the glare of the public spotlight. That has its dangers, as we have all seen from the sensationalism that has accompanied disclosure of these problems. But it is the indispensable first step to learning how to deal with them. The new willingness to face the situation as it is may be one of the biggest achievements of the 1980s. The 1989 meeting of the UN Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery will be centred on children. It will have as its theme "prevention of sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography".

  There have been other, more concrete accomplishments on these issues, too: improved legislation and enforcement, preventive programmes, counselling and support for families coping with these difficulties, clearinghouses to help find missing children and reunite runaways with their families, telephone hotlines for children and adults. (An interesting observation from one hotline: grandparents are as likely as parents to seek help in this way.)
- There are many more organizations supporting the child's right to be heard, to participate in decisions, to have access to information concerning himself or herself, to be represented by independent legal counsel (in custody cases, for example, or for children in care). The appointment of a children's "ombudsperson", a position that already exists in a few countries, is under study in several additional nations.
- There are many more programmes to help children learn about their human rights and responsibilities—and those of others. This is happening in schools, in religious groups and in youth movements. Some excellent materials have been produced. Orientation of teachers is a priority.

The new Constitution of Brazil, adopted in June 1988, has a strong, detailed section on [illegible] children's rights. Its adoption resulted from the work of a national coalition that included 300 local groups, associations of [illegible] and lawyers, the Roman Catholic church, child [illegible], lawyers, journalists, legislators, [illegible] and children themselves. Some 3000 children, artists and well-known national figures staged rallies in Brasília and other cities as the Constitution was being debated.[11]

Assessment of a decade

After ten years of unparalleled attention to the rights of the child, how much progress have we made? Several interviewees said flatly that in spite of it all, *"We have regressed."* They feel that the reality of children's lives all around the globe reflects a lowering of standards vis à vis children and that violations of children's human rights are more widespread than ever. The more pessimistic used phrases like "throwaway lives" as they spoke of adults callously using children for drug trafficking, terrorism and sex tourism.

On the other hand, many people feel that there have been improvements that will have an effect over time. They mention first of all the

increase in awareness and awakening of consciences, then improvements in legislation, juvenile justice procedures, protection of the rights of children in care, family support services, education for parenting. And there will be, it appears, an international Convention to use as a standard.

The concept, and the implication, of children having "human rights" is still only vaguely understood by the general public. The term is still loosely and sometimes superficially used—the publicity on the Convention may have created a certain "bandwagon" mentality. Yet the deeper awareness and activist mentality is certainly there, too. And few would deny that in the 1980s we are slowly groping toward that definition of "children's rights" that was so acutely felt to be missing in the 1970s.

The drafting of the Convention has provided a rallying point for **advocacy** on children's rights. Can the implementation and monitoring processes provide the same rallying point for **action**? That may be largely up to the NGOs.

CHAPTER 3

Child Labour

"Private non-governmental organizations can claim a pride of place for their achievement in the provision of vital services for deprived groups, in publicising child abuse and exploitation and in promoting the interests of working children. Their role is all the more critical in situations where freedom of association and expression is discouraged and where the dimensions and severity of child exploitation are either unrecognized or deliberately concealed."

—Assefa Bequele, ILO [1]

Some work experience is good for children. They feel a sense of accomplishment and learn skills that are important for them and their societies. The work they do makes a significant social and economic contribution to the community, a contribution that was long undervalued but is now being recognized and studied. (In 1979 the NGO/IYC Committee searched in vain for even one study or estimate putting a figure on children's contribution to the economy.) Work can be, should be, and often is, a satisfying and creative experience for children and a benefit to families and communities.

This chapter is not about that kind of child labour. It is about children working in circumstances that put their physical, mental and social development at risk, children working in situations where they are exploited, mistreated and denied the basic rights of any worker or human being. Millions of children, and especially those living in extreme poverty, have no choice but to accept that kind of employment, simply to ensure their own or their family's survival.

Today children, often very young children, work long hours in dangerous, unsanitary and unwholesome environments. They can be found doing backbreaking or tedious labour in mines, brickworks, construction sites, garbage dumps, "cottage industries", factories, hotels and restaurants and on the streets. They toil as bonded labourers, are abused as domestics, are forced into prostitution. And all for minuscule earnings or no earnings at all after the employer's "deductions" are made.

Background

In the first half of this century great progress was made in regulating and reducing the incidence of child labour, especially in countries where the standard of living was rising and school enrolments were expanding. But progress was uneven, even in the more "advanced" countries. For some forgotten populations and for some areas of the world, there was no information about child workers. The attention focused on the issue during IYC made many people

realize for the first time that abusive child labour was not a thing of the past but a very present reality for millions of the world's children.

Starting in 1978 the Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights published a series of well-documented reports on child labour in different countries. They had an immediate impact in both the UN and NGO communities. The Society was carrying out a catalytic strategy similar to that described in Chapter 1. First they gathered the facts and then, because they saw child labour as a human rights issue, they worked with like-minded governments and NGOs to make sure it got on the right international agendas. In this case that meant the Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Working Group on Slavery. A Special Rapporteur was appointed in 1980 and presented his report in 1981, acknowledging the substantial contribution made by NGOs.

> "In Northeast Brazil there are some 50,000 young people, some only 12-14, living in brothels as prostitutes. Many of the children were condemned to this existence by being bought from their parents or because they had been raped when working as domestic servants."
>
> —UN Report, 1983[1]

The findings of the Sub-Commission were brought to the attention of other UN agencies, including not only ILO, but UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO and UNDP. The WHO undertook a study on health risks for child workers; UNICEF began including information on child labour in its situation analyses. During the 1980s many NGOs, national and international, have added to our knowledge of child labour and have been determined advocates for change.

ILO had intensified its work on child labour in connection with IYC. Several useful publications and initiatives resulted. Certain governments looked again at Convention 138 concerning minimum age for employment and became Parties to it. The International Labour Conference in 1979 adopted a Resolution that reflected a much better understanding of the extent and nature of child labour, particularly its relation to poverty and underdevelopment. At the 1983 International Labour Conference the Director General's Report was devoted to this theme, while insisting that the intransigence of those problems can not be used as an excuse for continuing to allow violations of children's basic rights as human beings and as workers.

A change in approach

In the meantime, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations alike were coming to some important conclusions about the best approach to combating child labour:

- Elimination of all harmful or exploitative forms of child labour should remain the long-term objective, but in the short term the children who are at work now must be protected and assisted, starting with measures to help the youngest and most vulnerable.
- In the past, legislation was the main tool of those trying to eliminate or regulate child labour. Yet legislation alone has not always had the desired effect. Either it has not been enforced, or it has driven child labour underground, leaving the children who must work even more vulnerable. Legislation, while a necessary first step, is not sufficient in itself.
- Child labour can not be dealt with in isolation from the poverty, deprivation and exclusion in which it is rooted. Legislation must be accompanied by comprehensive and pragmatic measures

designed to get at the causes of child labour. There must be employment or alternative sources of income for adults so that families are not dependent for their survival on the income of working children. Free and compulsory education is again a necessary first step but may not be enough unless the costs associated with schooling are within the means of all families, and unless the education that is offered is relevant and valued by the family and society. The conditions that make child labour an attractive option for employers also need to be corrected.

While working toward the eventual elimination of child labour, governments, UN agencies and NGOs collaborate on a number of projects to improve the lives of today's working children. Some examples:

- In India the Asian Youth Centre runs a recreation and meeting centre for young hotel workers at Saidapet and helps them organize to strengthen their bargaining position.
- In Brazil, CESAM (the Salesian Centre for Minors) has a direct employment programme offering guidance and protection from exploitation.
- Another NGO, Child Workers in Asia, concentrates on dissemination of information and network building around the issue of child labour.
- The Undugu Society of Kenya offers basic education and vocational training for parking boys and school drop-outs, as well as other programmes to help with school fees and provide loans for self-employment schemes.
- LAWASIA has run training workshops for lawyers and jurists in the Asian and Pacific region to help them to contribute to the struggle against exploitation of child labourers.

What we have learned

NGOs working with child labourers have been credited with "flexibility, ingenuity and conviction". However, there have been disappointments, too. Coverage in NGO projects remains very small. The expected expansion can not take place in some instances because, after the first project or two, there is a shortage of volunteers to do the demanding, time-consuming work that volunteers are expected to carry out.

Sometimes NGO projects are not meant to expand but to serve as models for an eventual revamping of government services. So far, it has been difficult to bring about change in government policies and practices, in part because of the need to operate with existing personnel or within existing structures. But this should change with time, as low-cost alternative methods continue to demonstrate their effectiveness.

There has been an explosion of research and information on child labour in the last decade. More national and local NGOs are bringing exploitative situations to light. Governments are more open in admitting abuses. International organizations have focused on it. There is clearly greater public awareness of the problem. Has it led to effective action? Some say we have improved legislation

"Child labor is on the increase in China, with a fifth of the workers in some factories under the legal age of 16, the People's Daily has reported. It said the number of children working had risen this year, especially in coastal areas where economic growth has been very rapid. More girls work than boys. The newspaper said factories preferred children to adults because they earned less and were more obedient and dextrous."

—Reuters, *International Herald Tribune* [3]

and encouraged assistance and service programmes but that we have been reluctant to tackle the vested interests and long-standing economic practices that are at the root of the problem.

There is more information on child workers but still not enough. Reliable quantitative data are rare. Since much child labour is illegal or patently exploitative, employers are not going to give facts and figures. Parents and child workers themselves are intimidated and reluctant to speak even in the most intolerable situations for fear of losing what little income they do derive from the child's work.

In spite of the progress made in many countries, the total number of child workers is probably greater now than in 1979. Recent ILO figures show 80 million child workers between 10-14 years of age around the world.[4] Since this figure does not include working children under 10 or those who are employed clandestinely, the actual number is certainly much higher. Estimates run up to 150-200 million. (Once more we have the familiar question encountered in so many issues affecting children: has the incidence actually increased, or has awareness and reporting improved?)

It is clear, too, that this is not exclusively a problem of developing countries. Some children work illegally and in harmful and exploitative conditions in almost every country.

Many studies over the last decade confirm the immediate and long-term physical consequences for children of work that is too heavy, dangerous, or carried out in unhealthy environments. Child workers tend to weigh less and to have more sickness than other children. There is a high accident rate for children in many occupations, and they are frequently left with impairments and illnesses that handicap them for life.

The intellectual and social costs to the child and community are also high. The child who works may miss out on school entirely—a distinct possibility for girls, for whom education is considered less important anyway in some communities. At the same time, since children usually do the most tedious and unskilled work, they get very little or no training on the job. Most are not learning skills that are transferable to other jobs later. Ironically, their long work experience as children, especially if it precluded education, leaves them quite unprepared to compete on the adult job market. They are at risk of lifelong marginalization.

> "In the quarries [of Bogota] 50% of the child labourers were attending school at the time of the survey, including those participating in evening sessions held at the local community centre. One of the quarriers said, 'While a child is sitting sand, he forgets his lessons. It is much too hard for children to study while they are working.'"
>
> —*Combating Child Labour*, ILO[5]

One result of the last decade's research on child workers is the finding that a surprisingly large number of them do go to school as well as work. It is a struggle, though. The long hours of work and school, the fatigue, the frequent absences, poor nutrition—all these take their toll. Working children often do not do very well in regular schools. Sometimes, because of their occupation or their family's low status, they are ostracized by the other children.

Nevertheless, the desire for education is surely something to be encouraged and supported. Many NGO programmes do this by providing special classes, meals and other services for working children. Or they campaign for more flexibility and understanding in the regular school system so that child workers can attend and succeed.

With increasing urbanization the number of child workers in urban areas is mounting. While there are dangers and abuses for children working in agriculture, conditions seem to be even worse for young workers in the cities. The work environment is often unhealthy and dangerous, and there are many possibilities for exploitation by employers.

Especially vulnerable are the children who go or are sent to the city to earn money while their families remain in the rural area. These children often end up in occupations and living conditions far different from what their parents imagined.

A 1985 issue of the newsletter of the Asian Cultural Forum for Development, a special issue on child labour, reports on an incident near Bangkok: police raided a mosquito net factory after a complaint from an NGO and found 60 children aged 13-15 who were forced to work from 6 a.m. to midnight without pay. The owner claimed the money had been given to the parents in advance.[8]

Because this chapter uses examples from specific countries, it is necessary to mention here the cautionary words of one expert on child labour. He pointed out that governments who admit that child labour is a problem in their country and try to do something about it—governments who facilitate research and publication of findings—these governments may find themselves the objects of the loudest criticism. Because of their increased openness, they become the "whipping boys" at international assemblies. This, said the interviewee, is not only unfair but tends to discourage other governments who may have been thinking of adopting a more open attitude.

Child workers, with a little support and encouragement, have proved to be quite capable of organizing to claim their rights and improve their lot. NGO programmes, as well as those with intergovernmental and governmental sponsorship, are bringing the young workers into the planning and implementation of projects. This is a boost to their sagging self-esteem and it gives them practice in making decisions and planning for the future. It also makes for better programmes.

An interesting "dialectic" between international and national initiatives.

In the past ten years, on the issue of child labour, there has been an interesting "dialectic" between international and national initiatives. The increased international exposure of the problem in the late 70s and early 80s, along with international standard setting, stimulated greater awareness and activity at the national level. National and local non-governmental groups, in addition to providing services for child workers, began bringing more abuses to light and advocating for action on them. Publications like the *International Children's Rights Monitor* gave the national reports worldwide resonance, so that the national experience now comes back to inform and give urgency to further international standard setting. The results can be seen, for example, in the work of the ILO and in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 32).

The challenges for the future

In spite of the progress, huge challenges remain. NGO action on child labour has been especially fruitful and is still needed in these areas:

- Helping affected communities organize so they can improve their socioeconomic status and strengthen families, reducing the need for children to work.
- Providing appropriate, accessible health, education, social and welfare services for child workers and their families, preferably through community-based programmes.
- Carrying out research and information campaigns on the nature and consequences of child labour.
- Bringing exploitation and abuses to light and advocating for action in all the places where the topic should be discussed and acted upon.

CHAPTER 4

Refugee Children

"I have great hopes in refugee children...the environment during their life as a refugee plays an essential role. Children have to be helped so that the experience that was negative at the outset, can become positive for the future."

—Masanori Kobayashi
Photographer who works with refugee children [1]

Few groups of children have benefited from as much concentrated attention as refugee children have received during this past decade. Few groups of children needed it more.

At least half of the 12-14 million refugees in the world today are children. They have fled from conflict, persecution, famine and drought. A major portion of the services and humanitarian assistance they have received has come from NGOs, working sometimes as operational partners of UNHCR, sometimes directly with the host government. NGOs have raised millions of dollars and have mobilized hundreds of staff members and volunteers to bring relief to refugees and help them get started on rebuilding their lives. That story is well known and will not be repeated here.

Less well known is the work that NGOs and UN agencies have done to help refugee children in other ways: by advocacy and information campaigns aimed at governments and the public; by using their field experience to help improve future humanitarian operations and shape new international standards and policies; and by insisting on an approach to the refugee child that sees the whole child, with all his or her varied needs and possibilities, short-term and long-term.

At the time of the IYC, refugee children were widely recognized as a vulnerable group with special physical and other needs...the "other" rather vaguely articulated. Among NGOs, UN organizations and humanitarian assistance agencies there was a growing body of expertise in working with refugee children, but there had been relatively little systematic exchange of experience and few attempts to pull together the lessons that had been learned. That situation has changed dramatically in the decade since IYC.

Unaccompanied refugee children

In 1979 the "boat people" and the increasing refugee flows throughout Indochina brought to international attention a doubly vulnerable group of children: unaccompanied refugee children. Concerned NGOs set up a Sub-Group on Unaccompanied Minors within the Working Group on Refugees of ICVA (the International Council of Voluntary Agencies). Representatives of UNHCR, ICRC and UNICEF

met with the NGOs (most of whom had workers in the field dealing with refugee children) to share information, to discuss policy and to see what NGOs could do to better meet the needs of unaccompanied children. Each year the findings of the Sub-Group were relayed to the UNHCR Executive Committee in a special statement from ICVA.

The Sub-Group developed brief guidelines on the care and protection of unaccompanied refugee children and circulated them to NGOs, UN agencies and governments. It was urgent to disseminate better information on these children in order to discourage some of the ill-considered initiatives of that period. Media coverage of their plight had created tremendous pressures to send them to Europe or North America for adoption or foster care—a move strongly opposed by most UN and NGO staff in the field. They knew that many of the children could be reunited with parents or family members and that precipitous removal to foreign cultures was not the answer in any case.

Late in the 1980s two landmark publications appeared, both of them exemplary distillations of shared experience on unaccompanied children. One is entitled *Unaccompanied Children—Care and Protection in Wars, Natural Disasters and Refugee Movements*, by Everett M. Ressler, Neil Boothby and Daniel J. Steinbock.[2] The authors, who had worked with unaccompanied children in Thailand in 1980-82, gathered information on unaccompanied children going back to the Spanish Civil War. They combed through published and unpublished documentation, much of it in the archives of national and international relief organizations. The historical review that makes up the first part of the book identifies common patterns and problems; other sections look at unaccompanied children from psychological and legal perspectives. The book concludes with recommendations for policy-makers and practitioners.

A perfect complement to that exhaustive study is a concise booklet entitled *Unaccompanied Children in Emergencies—A Field Guide for their Care and Protection.*[3] It was written by Jan Williamson and Audrey Moser and published by International Social Service. In very condensed form the Field Guide presents principles, standards and guidelines for dealing with unaccompanied children of all ages. This is combined with numerous detailed, practical suggestions for field workers. The booklet has been widely welcomed and put to use, both in the field and for training programmes.

"Friendship is something that I don't understand, but I like it."

—7-year-old refugee from El Salvador[4]

These two publications resulted from a long process of sharing of experience and consensus building among NGOs and UN organizations working with unaccompanied children. The financial support for the two publications reflected the widely recognized importance of the issue and the willingness of many different types of institutions to support this kind of work for children. The projects were made possible by combinations of grants from a private foundation, national and international NGOs working with refugee children, a church group, a government ministry, ICRC, UNHCR and UNICEF.

All refugee children at risk

After several years of concentrating on the needs of unaccompanied refugee children, the members of the ICVA Sub-Group decided to broaden its mandate to cover refugee children in general. (The term "refugee children" is used here, as it is in UNHCR documents, to include children who are refugees, asylum-seekers and externally displaced persons. It is recognized that children displaced within their own countries have many of the same needs and problems, but often with less access to international protection and assistance.)

The Sub-Group discussions had revealed a number of areas of concern about refugee children: health and education programmes, legal status (statelessness and lack of birth registration), questions of physical protection and protection from sexual or other exploitation, unsatisfactory treatment of minors seeking asylum, the right of refugee children to express their opinions and take part in decisions affecting their future, the harmful effects of increasingly long stays in camps, the special needs of disabled refugee children and those living in families not their own.

For several years the Sub-Group had been recommending the establishment of a special focal point for children within the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. In late 1986 a Working Group on Refugee Children at Risk was set up at the UNHCR headquarters. It was felt that appointing one person as a focal point would not be as effective as a group that could include specialists from the various units concerned with refugee children, e.g., social services, education, health and nutrition, resettlement, refugee law and doctrine, etc. Staff members from programme management and regional bureaus have met with the Working Group as needed. There is a link with the UNHCR Steering Group on Women. A representative from UNICEF attends meetings of the Working Group on Refugee Children at Risk, and there has been liaison with other UN agencies from time to time. Liaison with the NGO community has been close from the beginning.

The UNHCR Working Group prepared a *Note on Refugee Children* that was submitted by the High Commissioner to the 1987 session of the UNHCR Executive Committee. It reflected many of the concerns expressed by the NGO Sub-Group. The Conclusions adopted by the Executive Committee led to the drawing up of a set of *UNHCR Guidelines on Refugee Children*. This document stresses that all action on behalf of refugee children *"should be guided by two fundamental and universally recognized principles: the best interests of the child and family unity."*

The *Guidelines*, which were prepared by the in-house Working Group primarily for UNHCR Field Offices, call attention to the problems that confront refugee children, review UNHCR policies regarding children, and suggest practical steps Field Offices can take to see that the needs of refugee children are met in their on-going programmes.

The *Guidelines* have been widely praised by NGOs, both for their content and for the process by which they were developed: a draft was circulated in early 1988, there was a consultation with NGOs

later in the spring, the revised version was issued in August. NGOs find the document useful not only for their own headquarters and field staff, but to use in approaching governments or other bodies in their advocacy efforts for refugee children.

Information and Advocacy

During the 1980s a number of initiatives, governmental and non-governmental, international and national, have contributed to a deeper understanding of refugee children. Some examples:

- A *Selected and Annotated Bibliography on Refugee Children* was prepared by the UNHCR Centre for Documentation on Refugees. It contains a useful review of international legal instruments relevant to refugee children. It was published in cooperation with the Save the Children Alliance, which has identified refugee children as one of a limited number of issues that the Alliance will focus on in the future.
- The June 1988 issue of *REFUGEES* magazine was devoted to refugee children.
- Growing academic interest is reflected in the course on refugee children offered by the Refugee Studies Programme of Webster University in Geneva and in the research undertaken by the Refugee Studies Programme at Oxford University.
- Child-to-Child has prepared a booklet showing how the principles of that movement can be usefully adapted to children in refugee camps or settlements.
- The Catholic Consortium on Refugee Awareness in Washington, working with refugee advocacy groups and teacher organizations, has developed a Teachers Guide and a curriculum on refugees for grades 6 - 12. It is called *Flight to Hope*.

Concern for non-material needs of refugee children

In emergency situations refugee workers and administrators sometimes feel (understandably) that their efforts have been a success if the refugee population is fed, housed, clothed and provided with health services. Anything else, said one interviewee, is considered "icing on the cake". Not so, insist many NGOs and UN officials.

NGO work for refugee children over the past decade has emphasized the importance of concern for the whole child, being sensitive to psychological, emotional, cultural and spiritual needs as well as physical. This concern manifests itself, for example, in the support given to education, cultural programmes, and community support programmes.

Concern for non-material needs has led to increased attention to psychological trauma among refugee children. As the result of initiatives taken by the International Catholic Child Bureau and Columbia and Duke Universities, certain groups now coordinate the instruments they use in research on refugee children so they will be able to compare results. The objective is to develop interventions

"What I like best about this Project is the library because the books are interesting and the big pillows are very soft."

—11-year-old refugee from El Salvador[5]

"Where refugee children have special needs that must be met through separate activities, these should be carried out with the full participation of their families and communities, rather than addressing children in isolation."

—*UNHCR Guidelines on Refugee Children*[4]

that can be carried out by the refugee community to help alleviate the effects of the trauma so many refugee children have suffered.

Another noticeable trend in work with refugee children is the insistence on the child as a member of a family and of a community. Programmes that target the child alone are giving way to family-oriented services that seek to enhance the capacity of families to care for their own children, building on the community's traditional patterns of child rearing.

Priorities for the future

Interviewees mentioned these concerns as priorities for future work with refugee children:

- Attention to non-material needs and psychosocial well-being, and exchange of experience in this field.
- Development of interventions to deal with the consequences of trauma.
- Provision of more comprehensive educational programmes.
- Sharper focus on the needs of disabled refugee children and action to assist them.
- Monitoring of government policies and practices towards children, especially unaccompanied children, who are seeking asylum or resettlement.
- Research and information campaigns on the effects of long stays in camps, combined with a stronger push for political solutions that will allow refugees to return home in safety and dignity.
- Finding ways to give better support to refugee women, including both material assistance and measures to bolster their psychosocial well-being. The welfare of refugee children is inextricably linked to that of refugee women, and doubly so in the many cases where a woman must assume sole responsibility for the family due to the absence or death of her husband.
- Disseminating and using the *UNHCR Guidelines on Refugee Children*, and helping to monitor their implementation.

CHAPTER 5

Street Children

"Street child becomes street youth—very quickly....as soon as the youngster has to fend for himself or herself alone, the street eliminates childhood."

—Susanna Agnelli, ICIHI Report [1]

Chapter headings divide the world of children quite artificially. In reality there is of course a great deal of overlap. Many of the street children considered here are also the child workers or the abused children discussed in other chapters. They are likely to be children of the very poor or to be from ethnic and racial minorities. They are separated here only to illustrate the different ways NGOs and UN agencies bring children's needs into the international spotlight and take action.

Children working and possibly living on the streets is no doubt a phenomenon as old as cities themselves. International exposure of their plight goes back many years. One interviewee reminisced: "I remember seeing a most disturbing film on street children in Latin America when I first came to Geneva in 1956. Sad to think that little has changed in 30 years except that there are so many more of them now. We all know... but what have we done?"

Background

All figures on street children are open to challenge. Estimates range from 10 - 100 million, and it is not at all clear what these figures include. Presumably they take in boys and girls who are children "of the street", those who live there all the time, as well as the children "on the street" who spend a significant portion of their time living or working there. Though often confused with "abandoned" children, most street children have some contact with their families. In Brazil in 1984, of the 36 million children classified as needy *(carentes)*, it was estimated that 7 million were completely abandoned.[2]

"What's happening in Alaska happens in a lot of places. The culture there is breaking apart, just the way a family breaks apart when things change too fast. The experts call it 'displacement'.... Native Alaskan children make up only 9% of the population, but account for almost 50% of the children in child welfare, 40% in corrections, and about half of those on the street!"

—Covenant House 1987 Annual Report[3]

If there is little consensus on exact numbers, there is agreement that the number is growing rapidly. In view of rural-urban migration, strains on families and other factors that contribute to the creation of street children, most observers feel that their numbers will double within a generation...unless the preventive activities that are now being undertaken worldwide can turn this trend around. Reviewing the history of NGO activities in this field, there is room for hope, although certainly none for complacency.

Numerous private organizations, notably religious groups, have been providing food, shelter, health care and sometimes education or training for street children for many decades. Child welfare organizations in many countries were well aware of the needs but programmes were few and perhaps somewhat lacking in imagination, most of them tending to be "institution-based". The people working directly with street children often worked in isolation.

Children living on the streets are a feature of industrialized and developing countries alike.

In an attempt to break that isolation, a Commission within the International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB) decided in the mid-70s to survey people working with street children around the world. A few of them came together in an international seminar on street children held in Bombay in 1979. During the IYC, UNICEF and many NGOs contributed to a further exchange of information on the subject, and for the first time the full nature and extent of the phenomenon became apparent to the international community. An important "discovery" was made: children living on the streets are a feature of industrialized and developing countries alike.

The Inter-NGO Programme

With the support of UNICEF, and with ICCB acting as the catalyst, the "Inter-NGO Programme on Street Children and Youth" was launched in 1982. There were eight NGO members. A representative of UNICEF attended meetings of the group as an observer. The Programme's objectives were to promote exchanges between people working with street children and to increase public awareness of the issue.

A newsletter and other publications brought information to an ever-growing network of people concerned about street children. Regional and national seminars took place. ENDA (Environment and Development in the Third World) organized meetings in Dakar, Kinshasa and Abidjan where street children took the floor. In New York Covenant House, one of the members of the Inter-NGO Programme, arranged an international conference that attracted people from all over the world. UNICEF sponsored a series of seminars in Latin America. The Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues published a report on the topic that had a great impact.[4]

"Karanja is a beautiful-looking boy. From the age of 8 he has been on the streets. He is a parking boy, which means that he helps motorists find a place to park their cars. He tells them that he will guard their cars and the property inside it. His smile captivates the eyes and ears of the people who willingly give him a few shillings each time they meet him.

"He is clever in overseeing the customers while his colleagues try to steal their property. Karanja is fast in running away when he smells danger. He can't bear to see a policeman. One night, while he is running away from the police, he is hit by a car and dies on the spot. His funeral is attended by a crowd of street boys...

"Those who knew him still remember his smile, his agility and promptness in offering his services to people. Karanja liked people and was liked by them; he exploited them with the only skill he had: his smile."

Fabio Dallape, Undugu Society of Kenya[5]

By late 1985 the 3-year Inter-NGO Programme was nearing the end of its mandate. An assessment by one of its members found that *"...the international scene had changed considerably with regard to street children compared to a few years earlier. The street children phenomenon had been put on the agenda of several international and national organizations, had received press coverage, was recognised as a major policy issue by some governments, and many field workers had been brought out of their isolation."* [6]

Efforts by some of the Programme's members had also stimulated NGO initiatives in other quarters: in April 1984, in conjunction with the UNICEF Executive Board meeting in Rome, the NGO Committee on UNICEF organized a Forum on *"children in especially difficult circumstances"*. One of its workshops was devoted to street children. Some UNICEF Board members participated in the workshop; the full Board heard the report on the Forum.

The Board then requested that a report on children in especially difficult circumstances be prepared for its 1986 Session. At that Session, after another NGO Forum had dramatized the need for a more vigorous international response on the question, the Board adopted a Resolution committing UNICEF to action at the country level and recommending that UNICEF play a major role in the UN system's work on street children.

Help for street children

April 1986 also saw the birth of a new worldwide movement for street children, with members of the Inter-NGO Programme acting as midwives: Christian Children's Fund, Covenant House, Rädda Barnen, World Council of Churches, the International Catholic Child Bureau and UNICEF. The organization, christened CHILDHOPE, became operational in early 1987.

CHILDHOPE, like the Inter-NGO Programme before it, seeks to be a global advocate for street children and to develop a global network supporting their cause. It does not itself carry out projects for street children but seeks to support the people who do. It has correspondents in over 100 countries.

CHILDHOPE gives priority to preventive action, to programmes designed to prevent abuse, exploitation, family disintegration and child abandonment. Special priority is also given to programmes to help young girls who are street children or at risk of becoming street children.

Indigenous NGOs and street children themselves have been at the origin of many creative initiatives to improve their situation. Some examples:

- In Belem, Brazil, there is the "Republic of Young Tradesmen". Its 500 members are car-washers, coffee-sellers, newspaper- and shoeshine-boys. Volunteer counsellors make sure they get a good lunch at a nominal price, and there is a ready ear to listen to their problems or those of their families. By repairing discarded goods and selling them the project is becoming increasingly self-sufficient.
- SKI (Street Kids Incorporated) is a courier service in Khartoum run by a group of street boys. Through the project they get the use of a bicycle, some training in Arabic, English and arithmetic, and have access to medical care and counselling if they want it. A Sudanese organization called Sabah provides the organizational umbrella for the project.
- The YWCA national associations in Latin America (Young Women's Christian Association) met recently to discuss "Training Young Women for Change." Street children was the issue identified for future work and training in local branches.

In 1986 in Brasilia 400 street children came together at the first national conference of street children. They chose six topics that they wanted to say something about: work, family, getting themselves organized, health, schooling and violence...especially the violence, the preoccupation of street children everywhere. For once, the world listened to them.

Street children in industrialized countries

The life-style of children on the streets in industrialized countries may be rather different from that of children in Bombay or Bogota (except for the universal fear of violence), but the causes of their being there are not all that different. A recent survey of homeless children carried out by the Streetwise National Coalition in Ireland, found that these young people had left their homes because of:

- family problems, including difficulties with parents and break-up of the family
- physical and sexual abuse

"Ten years ago, you could not imagine that happening. These children were swept off the streets when visitors came to town."

- alcohol and substance abuse by either a parent or the young person
- emotional problems and dropping out of school
- economic problems.

The Coalition that took the initiative to do this survey is made up of voluntary agencies and individuals who work with young people. The research proved what they had been trying to bring to the attention of the authorities and the public for a long time: youth homelessness is a sad reality in their country. The number involved (700) is still small compared to other countries, but the need for action is just as strong.

After ten years

In spite of the revelations of the past decade as to the number of street children and the incredibly difficult lives they lead, in spite of the complexity of the causes that lead them to the streets—there is a certain cautious optimism expressed by many who know the situation best. Perhaps the ingenuity and coping skills of the young people rub off on those who work with them. Or perhaps the optimism comes from the feeling that the world is aware of this phenomenon now as never before and that the conscience of humanity will not allow it to continue much longer.

There are positive signs of change in public and governmental attitudes. One interviewee pointed to the changes in Brazil, where some of the demands that came from the street children conference are getting serious consideration in the legislature. Street children are recognized as human beings with rights. *"Ten years ago, you could not imagine that happening. These children were swept off the streets when visitors came to town."*

CHAPTER 6

Children and War, Children and Peace

"Civilians, not least children, are victimised in armed conflicts. Modern warfare tends to be indiscriminate or even aims to target the civilian population. Such terror is banned in international humanitarian law. However, these standards are frequently not respected. This problem reflects a major moral crisis and should be dealt with as such. Governments, public opinion and international organizations must now be mobilized to realize the seriousness of the situation: a humanitarian mobilization for humanitarian values."

—Rädda Barnen, 1987 [1]

At least 200 wars have ravaged our planet since "peace" came in 1945. Nearly every interviewee in this study commented on the disastrous consequences for children:

- *The direct effects of children losing their lives, their parents or their homes, or living with the physical and psychological scars of violence.*
- *The indirect effects of war through deterioration in health services, education, and the socioeconomic security of the family.*

One senses among NGOs and their UN partners in the '80s a renewed determination...

- To eliminate war, ultimately, as a way of settling conflicts.
- To protect children, meanwhile, from the consequences of war and violence.
- To help children build the peace that has eluded us.

These objectives are all the more urgent in view of the disturbing developments of the past few decades, not only the well known figures about the increase in the proportion of civilian casualties and deaths, but the fact that children themselves have become deliberate targets for violence. They are tortured, forced to watch family members tortured or executed, recruited as soldiers, and forced to commit acts of violence against others.

First step—fact finding

Condemnation of war and cataloguing of its ill-effects on children is of course not new. The violence of the 1980s, however, has produced an upsurge of activity in this domain:

- Robert Coles' sensitive works on children in violent and repressive situations; Roger Rosenblatt's 1982 *TIME* articles and book on children and war.

- The workshops on *Child Victims of Armed Conflict* at the NGO Fora held in Rome in 1984 and New York in 1986 in conjunction with UNICEF Executive Board sessions.
- The study on stress in Ugandan children who had survived the violence there, a study commissioned by UNICEF and carried out by Makerere and Bergen Universities.
- The 1985 Rädda Barnen Workshop in Mexico City to exchange experience on psychosocial work and psychotherapy with the children who had experienced violence in Central America. The report on this meeting and the study just mentioned on Uganda include a very useful review of the literature on the effects of war on children.
- *Children on the Front Line: the impact of apartheid, destabilization and warfare on children in southern and South Africa*, a collection of reports commissioned by UNICEF to assess the effects on southern Africa's children of *"underdevelopment compounded by war and economic destabilization and the resulting set-backs and dislocations"*.
- Amnesty International's reports on children and the increasing attention given to children in Amnesty groups throughout the world.
- The Quakers' (or Friends') pioneering work in this field, which goes back many decades. Their newsletter on children bearing military arms has become one of the basic resources for others who have more recently taken up this issue.

Masoika, age 11, Japan, describing a painting she has just finished:

"It is peace—it is wonderful—when the butterfly can sit upon the flower."[2]

The gathering of basic information on the effects of war and violence on children continues in many ways: the Columbia University project on Children and War; the research on trauma in ICCB's programme on the non-material needs of refugee children; the Mozambiquan government's attempt to identify and help the estimated 10% of the country's children who have been orphaned, mutilated, separated from parents or recruited for terrorist activities. Mozambique has found it necessary to develop a national "profile" of trauma. The Save the Children Federation/USA has a programme to train people to work with these traumatized children, and a family tracing service is envisaged.

Second step—press for action

Having assembled this information, the next step is to get it before the public and feed it into the debates in international and national fora where action can be taken. There were many examples of such initiatives in the 1980s:

- In the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child there has been a very active coalition pushing for stronger wording in the article on armed conflict, particularly for a higher minimum age for taking part in hostilities. The informal coalition on the issue has included governments (often led by Sweden), ICRC, and the Ad Hoc Group of NGOs.

- The UNICEF Executive Board in 1986 adopted a resolution on *"Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances"* that included a commitment to support programmes to protect the rights and well-being of children in situations of armed conflict.
- In October 1987 Rädda Barnen issued a widely-circulated Humanitarian Appeal for Children in Armed Conflicts. It was described on the title page as *"a plea for political action to ensure global respect for humanitarian principles"*. A shortened version appeared on the editorial page of the *International Herald Tribune*.
- Two conferences in Africa dramatized the issue on that continent: the *International Conference on Children in Situations of Armed Conflict in Africa*, Nairobi, July 1987, which was co-sponsored by the African Network on Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect and UNICEF; and the March 1988 *Artists and Intellectuals Symposium in Harare on Child Survival and Development in the Frontline States and in Southern Africa*, which included the unforgettable testimony of children from Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe who had been victims of war and destabilization.
- The Youth Section of the Swedish Red Cross drew up a "universal youth statement" urging governments and the UN to provide better protection for children in armed conflicts. It urges the drafters of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to strengthen the article on recruitment of minors for armed service. Two thousand copies of the statement were sent to children and youth groups around the world and positive replies were received from several hundred organizations representing 100 million individuals.
- In August 1988 the Friends World Committee for Consultation put before the UN Working Group on Slavery a report on child soldiers that spawned articles in *The Times*, *Le Monde*, the *New York Times* and *La Nacion* and led to TV and radio interviews. The UN arranged a press conference in order that correspondents could be briefed on the subject.

Rarely have the NGOs and their UN allies pursued an advocacy and information campaign with the tenacity shown in this campaign to protect children in armed conflict. However, that is only one side of the story. The ultimate goal is to eliminate war and violence as a means of settling conflicts.

Building peace

Many NGOs have concentrated on the other side of the equation—developing in children the capacity to construct a world without war and violence. Their programmes carry many names: peace education, education for international understanding, intercultural understanding.

International organizations made up of children and youth have made this a cornerstone of their programmes, e.g. Scouts, Guides, IMAC (International Movement of Apostolate of Children), Falcons.

They have devised ingenious ways to enable their young members from different countries and cultures to communicate and get to know one another.

Soldiers put down their guns and carry children to the health posts.

One NGO with long experience in this field is the International Committee of Children's and Adolescents' Movements (CIMEA), which works for the implementation of the rights of the child and for the education of children in the spirit of peace, friendship and social progress. CIMEA organized the international conference on *"Children, Peace and Development"* that took place in Yerevan, USSR, in 1986. UNICEF and its national liaison organization, the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the USSR were sponsors.

Education for peace has been a long-standing concern for curriculum developers, teacher organizations and other groups concerned with education, including those whose main interest is pre-school education. Many feel that this is the age where one must start to build international and intercultural understanding.

The United Nations system is of course specifically charged with "building peace in the minds of men". In regard to children, UNESCO is the organization most directly concerned and has cooperated with many NGOs and educational authorities on projects for international understanding and peace. UNICEF's work in development education is also closely related to education for peace and has involved a great deal of collaboration with NGOs working for children.

Another way of building peace through children is illustrated in UNICEF's initiatives to obtain temporary cessation of hostilities or "a zone of peace" so that the needs of children can be met. Scouts, Red Cross and religious groups have also been involved. Soldiers put down their guns and carry children to the health posts. There are examples from Uganda, El Salvador and Lebanon.

There have been attempts to promote a more concrete and systematic approach to this work through the introduction of "peace studies" in schools, or by teaching methods of non-violent conflict resolution. Various NGO and official groups have developed curricula for different age groups, from pre-school through university.

One teacher of peace studies at a university remarked about his incoming students, "I was teaching peace studies and they had been exquisitely educated in violence studies."

This relatively new discipline, which has burgeoned during the 1980s, probably has many origins: the need to react in the face of the dangers presented by a nuclear age; to try to reduce the violence and conflict seen around the world; perhaps to counteract the real and imagined violence that children are exposed to in the media, particularly television. In many countries NGOs are in the forefront of the movement to stop the "banalization of violence."

One contributor to this study, looking beyond the violence to peace, has a positive and practical suggestion to make. She recommends not only that we *"study more closely the ways in which war tears into children's lives,* [but] *the ways in which families and communities set about repairing the fabric of society once the violence has stopped.... I have been deeply impressed by the manner in which communities in Zimbabwe have handled the trauma of war after*

Independence. We need to know more about how communities do this so we can support them. Traditional healers played a vital role in helping to reconcile families and heal psychological wounds."

A decade of war and peace

It is hardly possible to summarize what the 1980s have meant for children in terms of war and violence. Perhaps the story related below tells it all. However, it must be weighed against what is described elsewhere in this chapter: a mounting awareness of the price children pay in modern wars, and a revived determination to bring about justice, peace and reconciliation. The decade has provided a few glimpses of that—just enough to know that it *can* be done.

Children—The future

In a Latin American country soldiers were sent to "clean out" an area suspected of harbouring guerrillas. Villages were destroyed, the people scattered and young men shot on sight. Then, in one place, the soldiers began rounding up and shooting young boys not more than 8, 10 or 12 years old. A woman rushed forward and implored the commanding officer to stop. *"What are you doing?"* she cried, *"these are not guerrillas, they are children."*

"They die because they are future guerrillas," was the reply.

—From an interview

CHAPTER 7 Children with Disabilities

"This large book, then, is a small tool in the struggle not only for the liberation of the disabled, but for their solidarity in the larger effort to create a world where more value is placed on being human than on being 'normal'—a world where war and poverty and despair no longer disable the children of today, who are the leaders of tomorrow."

***David Werner, in* Disabled Village Children [1]**

The book just quoted is subtitled A guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers, and families. *It is part of the drastically altered approach to disability that has characterized the late 1970s and the 1980s: community-based rehabilitation or CBR. It is the approach promoted by the World Health Organization in its manual* Training the Disabled in the Community *and by UNICEF/Rehabilitation International in* Childhood Disability: Prevention and Rehabilitation at the Community Level.

Community-based rehabilitation

For a long time, especially in developing countries, disabled persons were almost entirely left out of health planning and development planning because it was thought that: a) meeting their needs would be too expensive, b) it would be impossible without large numbers of highly trained professionals, c) it would require sophisticated and costly equipment and facilities.

There is some truth in all of those objections, of course—there is need for money, trained manpower and equipment to meet the needs of disabled persons—but a decade's experience with CBR shows that these are not the obstacles they were once thought to be. After a recent mission to look at CBR programmes in several countries, a specialist in the care of disabled children said that he had been impressed by three things:

- That these programmes could do so much with so little training and input of professional manpower. (The improvement in functioning of some of the people in the programmes was dramatic.)
- That the interest and respect shown to the disabled person and his or her family brought about a great improvement in self-esteem, which may be the most important result of all in the long run. The attention paid to a disabled person said, in effect, "This person is worth something!"
- That the programmes really are community-based. They are worked out at the community level to meet the particular needs of the disabled persons in that community.

The evaluator was impressed, too, by the support provided by the extended family or community. The person with a disability was

never alone but rather surrounded by people who knew him and could give the bit of help that was needed from time to time. The visitor observed that there is no service delivery system in industrialized societies that can equal this kind of naturalness, spontaneity and availability.

International Year of Disabled Persons—IYDP

An NGO staff member who was involved in preparing the IYDP feels that IYC gave a boost to IYDP, which came two years later in 1981. *"In fact,"* she remarked, *"disabled children received so much attention in IYC that when IYDP came along many people thought it was IYDC—for disabled children."*

Important policy shifts were taking place in that period 1979-1981. Some of them came from NGO/UN partnerships. For example, UNICEF commissioned Rehabilitation International to carry out a study of disability worldwide. After receiving the report the UNICEF Executive Board in 1980 adopted an "expanded strategy" toward disability. Dovetailing with the philosophy of primary health care (whose messages were just begining to be heard), the strategy had three aspects:

- effective prevention of childhood impairments,
- early detection and intervention to reduce the effects of disability,
- use of family and community as the primary vehicle for service delivery to the children already disabled.

To carry out the strategy the RI/UNICEF Technical Support Programme was set up. It produces the newsletter, *One in Ten,* which has been an important resource and link for many NGOs.

The IYDP was followed by the Decade of Disabled Persons, 1983-1992. A UN meeting of experts to evaluate progress at the mid-point of the Decade found that the major achievements were:

- increased awareness of the problems and rights of persons with disabilities
- growth of organizations of disabled people
- growing application of the concept of community-based services.

Among the obstacles to progress they listed lack of participation by disabled persons in the decision-making process; lack of resources and low priority for disability at the national and international level; lack of coordination at different levels; absence of reliable and comparable statistics.

In addition, they noted that certain groups of disabled persons had received little attention, notably persons with mental impairments, disabled women, persons with hearing impairments, the elderly disabled, people with multiple disabilities, disabled children without family or from migrant or refugee families.

An NGO set up in 1982, Operation Handicap Internationale (OHI), got its start providing rehabilitation services to physically handicapped

persons, especially amputees, in the refugee camps along the Thai-Kampuchean border. Its goal was to train local technicians and physical therapy assistants, preferably handicapped persons themselves, in order to create a pool of skilled persons able to care for the handicapped persons within the refugee population. The workshops in the border encampments produce orthopaedic devices using locally available materials. Many of the clients are children who have had a limb amputated. Ninety-five per cent of the amputations were caused by stepping on land mines. OHI has workshops in more than a dozen countries now.

UNHCR has initiated a process to improve the situation of refugees with disability. In late 1988 specialists from the UN and NGO communities came together in Puidoux, Switzerland, to assist in identifying the special needs of disabled refugees and work out ways to meet them. Both psychological and physical disabilities are to be taken into consideration—an important point for children.

As we draw near the end of the Decade, other assessments are appearing. Several interviewees commented on the remarkable progress that has been made in the first aspect of the expanded UNICEF programme—preventing disability, particularly by increasing immunization coverage and reducing the incidence of Vitamin A deficiency.

Now there are calls for UNICEF to strike more of a balance between the "S" and "D" in CSDR. "Survival for what?" is a frequent question, reflecting the growing concern for the quality of life of the children who—in ever-growing numbers—do survive. Among them will be many who have or acquire disabilities. Are we doing enough to ensure their development?

Progress in overcoming nutritional blindness

The World Health Organization recently set as one of its goals for the year 2000 the elimination of nutritional blindness. This decision would not have been made—the goal would not have been thought realistic—had it not been for the experience with Vitamin A capsules in preventive programmes in the '70s and '80s. (A Vitamin A capsule given to a child every six months can prevent xerophthalmia, the most frequent cause of blindness in young children.) NGOs played a major role in making that a successful experience.

Operational aspects of the programme began in India and Indonesia in the early '70s, with the distribution of Vitamin A capsules to all children in a given area as a preventive measure. The capsules were provided by UNICEF. NGOs with special expertise in the matter, the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind and the organization now known as Helen Keller International, assisted governments in designing, testing and improving programmes. Several factors appear to have contributed to the effectiveness of this programme:

- the very close tripartite cooperation between UNICEF, NGOs and governments
- operating through the existing national health system

- the International Vitamin A Consultative Group (UNICEF, WHO, Governments and NGOs—all represented by technical experts)
- the fact that different systems of distribution and delivery were tried out.

Recent evaluations have confirmed the effectiveness of the approach. Incidence of xerophthalmia has diminished in the areas concerned.

Helen Keller International has received funding for a 5-year programme to carry the operation one step further: HKI will help other NGOs, both national and international, to integrate the use of Vitamin A into their maternal and child health programmes, teaching local staff how to use it for both preventive and therapeutic purposes. The aim is to extend the coverage of Vitamin A programmes to the most remote communities.

The estimated number of blind children in the world is 7-9 million; 0.8% of them receive special education. The number of blind children is expected to at least double by the year 2000.[2]

Other NGO programmes show people how to get sufficient Vitamin A into their children's diets by using locally available green leafy vegetables. The Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) supported such a programme in the State of Tamil Nadu, India. It was run by women with basic training who resided in the villages. The programme was developed with the guidance and cooperation of the Royal Commonwealth Society of the Blind, WHO and UNICEF. The ACWW launched its fund-raising campaign through UNESCO's Co-Action Programme. When the pilot scheme had proved successful it was taken over by the State Government and expanded.

Think positive!

One of the recommendations of the mid-Decade meeting of experts was that more attention should be given to public information and education campaigns portraying disabled people as equal members of society. The International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap (ILSMH) had already produced an excellent brochure on this, *Think Positive: Advice on presenting people with mental handicap*. Using specific examples of words and pictures, the brochure shows voluntary agencies and media how to...

- *avoid reinforcing negative images* of persons with mental handicap (that they are pathetic, eternal children, sick, etc.)
- *present positive images* that show people with mental handicap as people who are more like others than different, who can enjoy life and bring happiness to others, who—with help—can and do grow in understanding and ability and make a contribution to society, who are worthy of the same respect as any other human person.

"If we don't believe in self-advocacy (for persons with mental handicap) it won't happen. The one thing we know today is that we can not predict how far a person's decision-making power will go."

—ILSMH Symposium, Madrid 1984 [3]

The booklet suggests several ways for people with mental handicap to serve as self-advocates. This concept was powerfully demonstrated at the Eighth ILSMH World Congress in Nairobi, where young people with mental handicap spoke before an audience of 700 people. They told of their experiences in different types of schools, institutions and independent living arrangements, with some wry observations on how these places are run and why. In answering

questions from the audience they showed that they had very definite, thought-provoking ideas about what they wanted to do with their lives and what kind of a society they would like to live in.

Integration—"we can"

Many youth organizations have made a special effort to encourage the integration of young people with disabilities into their membership. Sometimes the adult leaders are more hesitant about this than the young people themselves.

The World Organization of the Scout Movement has addressed this problem by developing a resource kit on health and handicap awareness for key people in national Scout associations. Its title, *"we can"*, gives an indication of the positive tone. Its message is the simple notion that Scouting is for all young people whatever their abilities, and the kit is full of practical, tested ideas for making that possible.

Books for Disabled Young People

The UN Draft Convention on the Rights of the Child has a clause promoting the child's right to read by enjoining the States Parties to encourage the production and dissemination of children's books. The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) has acted to see that children with disabilities enjoy this right just as other children do. In cooperation with the Norwegian Institute of Special Education, and with the financial assistance of UNESCO, IBBY has established in Oslo the IBBY Documentation Centre of Books for Disabled Young People.

The collection of materials at the Centre includes picture books suitable for young people who are retarded in language or reading development, or partially sighted. There are books about disabled persons, and books produced for persons with disabilities, such as tactile books and picture books with sign language. The Centre also offers an information and consulting service to disabled persons and their organizations, research workers, teachers, students, publishers, librarians and the press.

Summing up a Decade

Are disabled children better off today than they were 10 years ago? One experienced observer sums it up this way:

"No, we haven't made a dent in the problem yet, at least not in any way that has produced a fundamental change in the quality of life of children with disabilities. That will be a very long process.

"However, I am sure that there has been a change in the social atmosphere. There is more inclusion of children with disabilities, and there is more naturalness in this inclusion.

"There has been a profound impact on policies and programme strategies. Whether this has yet been translated into raising the level of life of children and families, it would be hard to say, but certainly the groundwork is being laid. And, although there is a long way to go, I am amazed at how far we have come. None of us thought ten years ago that change would come this fast."

CHAPTER 8 Health

"The concept of primary health care...is based on the active and responsible participation of the people—individually and collectively—at all levels of complexity of the health system and in all the processes that make the system work."

Dr D. A. Tejada-de-Rivera, WHO [1]

Priests, police and Prime Ministers; Buddhist monks and businessmen; imams and institutes of research; midwives and muhtars (village administrators); parents and Presidents; teachers and toy makers; nurses and national planners; Scouts and school children; soldiers and senior citizens; actors and anthropologists; media stars and M.D.s; judges, journalists and jingle writers; traditional healers and truck drivers; voluntary organizations and village elders—could anyone have guessed, at the beginning of this decade, what "participation of the people" in health care might really mean?

The list of people above is drawn from accounts of child immunization campaigns in three countries (Turkey, Colombia and Sri Lanka). It represents of course mobilization for special, highly publicized events. But the list of people involved in making primary health care work in the slow day-to-day development of the process and the infrastructure—that list would not be any less diversified, and it would also extend from the village level to the highest office in the land.

Primary health care

Most contributors to this study think that in the area of health the major development for children in the 1980s has been the drive to implement primary health care (PHC). Even prior to the 1978 Alma Ata Declaration NGOs, with their focus on community development, had been key actors in the shaping of primary health care concepts. NGOs can take some credit for the creation of new cadres of "first line" health workers, the community health workers.

There have been successes and failures, hard lessons have been learned, but NGOs all over the globe continue to count PHC as one of their priority activities. It is an activity that gives a certain unity of purpose and approach to thousands of local groups and to NGOs as diverse as the Sarvodaya movement, Voluntary Hospital Association of India, CARE, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Scouts and Guides, to give but a few examples.

The implementation of PHC has engendered important debates in UN and NGO circles. Should one concentrate first on building up cadres of local people and infrastructures? Can a few relatively simple and low-cost interventions that produce immediate benefits be used as entry points and building blocks for primary health care, accelerating

community development that way? Should we be concentrating on child survival through selective interventions without doing more about the poverty and injustice that continue to diminish the quality of life of the survivors?

The 1980s have seen some impressive advances in child health (immunization coverage, use of ORT, prevention of nutritional blindness); but the trend of decreasing child mortality has been slowed or even reversed in some places by wars or by the consequences of the debt crisis, stalled development, and poverty. The dynamics and the results of the latter unhappy struggle are persuasively set forth in the 1989 *State of the World's Children* report.

While local groups and NGOs continue to work for better health at the community level, complementary NGO initiatives have taken place at the international level.

Breastfeeding

The Joint WHO/UNICEF Meeting on Infant and Young Child Feeding, which took place ten years ago in Geneva, declared: *"Poor infant feeding practices and their consequences are one of the world's major problems and a serious obstacle to social and economic development. Being to a great extent a man-made problem it must be considered a reproach to our science and technology and a blot on our so-called development achievements."*

After that meeting the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) was formed to bring together national groups that had been working on this "man-made problem" for some time and to encourage the creation of other groups in as many countries as possible. The promotion of breastmilk substitutes was causing mothers to abandon breastfeeding in favour of bottle feeding, with tragic results for many children. (Without the immunity provided by breastmilk, and with the danger of contaminated bottles, infants not being breastfed are many times more likely to suffer illness and death.) Today IBFAN is a network of 100 organizations in 70 countries *"working to improve infant health through the promotion and protection of breastfeeding and appropriate weaning practices."*

After the 1979 meeting local and national IBFAN sections monitored marketing practices of baby milk companies and reported their findings to WHO and UNICEF, to national health authorities and the media. IBFAN participated in the WHO consultations on the drafting of the *Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes*, which was adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1981. IBFAN brought 90 networkers from 23 countries to Geneva to hear the debate and plan their future activities.

In the opinion of some contributors to this study, IBFAN's work on breastfeeding is one of the developments that has helped enhance the status of NGOs within the UN system. It has set some important precedents: involving grassroots groups directly in an international campaign, giving them the means to participate in international debates where matters affecting their people are decided, and bringing the recommendations back to local communities.

V. T. Vittachi, then Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, said in 1984 that, "people's movements are the most promising countervailing force there is.... If it was not for IBFAN's work and the public mobilization it provided, WHO and UNICEF would not have dared develop a Code..."[2]

"Unfortunately, child nutrition is not an exciting issue. Only when the press gets interested in a boycott does the average person learn about the problem. If everyone says breast is best, but few people value breastfeeding enough to fight for a change in political will that will ensure breastfeeding is protected."

—An IBFAN researcher[3]

IBFAN, of course, has not been alone. Many other national and international NGOs have helped spread awareness about the dangers of bottle feeding and the benefits of breastfeeding. La Leche League provides direct, mother-to-mother support for women who are breastfeeding and has training courses for health workers. Hundreds of local NGOs, like the Girl Scouts and Soroptomists of Zimbabwe, have joined forces to disseminate these messages. The Working Group on Nutrition of the NGO Committee for UNICEF has long given this priority and has recently held a workshop on *"Breastfeeding, Passport to Life"*.

Vaccine-preventable diseases

"During the past 15 years a public health revolution has quietly taken place. Immunization services which were virtually non-existent in developing countries in 1974 now administer a dose of measles vaccine to half the children of the world...a third dose of polio or DPT vaccines to 60% of children reaching their first birthday and BCG vaccine to over 60%."[4]

The WHO report from which this quotation is taken explains that when the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) was created in 1974, the goal of raising immunization levels to at least 80% for all children by 1990 seemed like wishful thinking. But the dream is being realized, thanks to a coalition of WHO Member States, several organizations of the UN system, multilateral and bilateral development agencies and private and voluntary groups. Each partner in this coalition has brought different resources and talents. WHO has provided technical assistance, training and prototype training materials. UNICEF has been the major provider of vaccines, supplies and equipment.

UNICEF's effectiveness in social mobilization is underlined in the WHO report. UNICEF is credited with bringing child health problems to the attention of world leaders and demonstrating the impact of low-cost child health interventions. The drive for Universal Child Immunization and the dramatic, well-publicized results of national immunization days have contributed to the acceleration of immunization programmes in many countries.

Many private voluntary groups have been involved in supporting immunization, including the Save the Children Funds of the Netherlands, United Kingdom and U.S.A. Rotary International, through its PolioPlus Programme, has raised US$ 240 million to support the immunization of children. The WHO report comments: *"Even more important than the funds, however, is the impact which thousands of individual Rotarians are having through their personal commitment to the immunization cause, lobbying in industrialized countries for more resources for immunization and working with ministries of health in a number of developing countries."*

The PolioPlus programme has as its objective a polio-free world. Progress has been so encouraging in this field, largely because of NGOs, that the 1988 World Health Assembly set the year 2000 as the target date for the eradication of the disease.

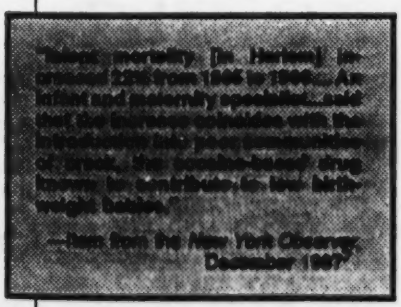
Rotary International, working with WHO and UNICEF, created the PolioPlus programme in 1985 to support the Expanded Programme on Immunization and the goal of Universal Child Immunization. A worldwide fundraising effort with a target of $120 million has raised double that amount. About 92% of the money goes for the purchase of vaccines. (The "plus" in PolioPlus means that the programme supports the purchase and delivery of vaccines to prevent all the childhood diseases covered in EPI, not just polio.)

"The coalition which has resulted from these many activities [on immunization] reflects a remarkable consensus in a world where so many things go wrong: children should be immunized, children can be immunized, children will be immunized." [6]

The PolioPlus programme illustrates how NGO programmes have mobilized not only financial support, but other kinds of support that may be more important for children in the long run: Rotary members in dozens of countries have learned about children's health needs and about the problems in setting up and sustaining immunization delivery systems. Coalitions of volunteers have contributed to every aspect of the immunization effort from marketing research (to find out why people do not come for second or third doses, for example) to providing logistics support, to advocacy at the highest levels of government.

The work on child immunization is one of the more encouraging health stories of the 1980s. Nevertheless, many challenges remain: questions of sustainability and linkage with other interventions, improving tetanus toxoid coverage for pregnant women, eliminating missed opportunities to vaccinate children, helping communities apply other health practices that contribute to maternal and child well-being, including ORT, improved nutrition, and birth spacing. Communities that were "aroused" by their involvement in EPI must continue *"to exert the political pressure to ensure a comprehensive array of primary health care services".* [5]

Substance Abuse



Several obstacles to improved child health were mentioned earlier in this chapter, but poverty, debt and war are not the only threats to progress in this field. Many contributors to this study point to substance abuse of all kinds as having disastrous effects on children in the 1980s—tobacco, alcohol, glue-sniffing, cocaine or crack.

Some people emphasize the health hazards of tobacco, and find it disquieting that smoking is on the increase among young girls in some countries and among young people in developing countries, who are targeted by cigarette advertisers. Others stress concern about the expanding use of alcohol among the young.

Many people feel, however, that priority must be given to stopping the spread of cocaine and crack. In the Americas children as young as 8 or 10 in both producing and consuming countries are involved in the production and sale of these substances. They are exposed not only to addiction but to the world of violence that surrounds the drug traffic. It would be hard to exaggerate the intensity of feeling with which the subject was raised in this study. People see it as a *"problem galloping out of control."*

Countless local NGOs are involved in efforts to combat these problems at the community level. At the international level the NGO Committees in New York and Vienna have been instrumental in

getting child-related issues onto the agendas of international meetings on drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

Some interviewees spoke of a "spin-off" from substance abuse that has been fully revealed only in this decade: the dangers for children born to mothers who are drug users. Community education and support programmes have been created to prevent and alleviate this problem, many of them run by NGOs.

AIDS

There have been few entirely "new" issues for children in the past decade. AIDS is one. NGOs have been in the forefront on the issue and will continue to play a major role in implementation of programmes because of their community roots and expertise in health education.

In areas where AIDS is spreading most rapidly among young drug users and their sexual partners, community-based NGO programmes are trying to prevent this through education and information campaigns and peer counseling. In other countries where AIDS has been spreading through the general population, NGO efforts have focused on community health workers and local leaders. Organizations like the Christian Medical Commission have developed prototype materials on AIDS for health workers. These materials can be easily adapted to local circumstances and reproduced. UNICEF has issued a brochure on children and AIDS and has supported a number of country-based programmes in AIDS education.

NGOs have been especially sensitive to the human rights issues connected with AIDS and the care of AIDS patients, especially children. AIDS affects children in many ways: some are born with the virus (HIV), some acquire it (child prostitution or intravenous drug use). Children whose parents are afflicted with AIDS have very special needs. And we are only beginning to consider the potential impact on children of the changed societal structures that could result from AIDS in certain areas.

Traditional practices harmful to women and children

Early in the 1980s both UNICEF and WHO issued position papers on female circumcision. Many NGOs, e.g. the International Council of Nurses, also stated their position and asked their members to work with appropriate colleagues and community groups to eliminate traditional practices that are harmful to the health of women and children.

Since 1977 a Geneva-based NGO Working Group has been collaborating with African NGOs on education and information programmes. In 1984 they organized a regional seminar in Dakar in cooperation with the Government of Senegal, UNICEF and WHO. Out of the meeting came an Inter-African task force called the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC).

The IAC now has 14 national groups as members. It supports local workshops, research and information campaigns. In 1987 a regional

seminar was held in Addis Ababa, co-sponsored by the Economic Commission for Africa, the Organization of African Unity, UNICEF and WHO. The seminar drew up a Plan of Action proposing practical, culturally-sensitive measures for the eradication of harmful practices. These include female circumcision, childhood marriage and early pregnancy, and food taboos that are detrimental to the health of women and children.

Health education

Here there is general agreement: health education has become more effective over the decade and is beginning to show results. There is greater cooperation between the government, intergovernmental and non-governmental sectors. Isolated health education projects are yielding to a more unified approach so that the messages that the child gets in school or in a youth group are reinforced when parents get the same messages via the media, in adult literacy courses, or at the workplace.

International bodies, governmental and non-governmental, have supported national and local efforts in a variety of ways:

- WHO has established an annual award to recognize outstanding contributions towards strengthening Health Education in primary health care. The cash prize of US$ 5,000 is to be used for continuing health education activities.
- The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and the World Organization of the Scout Movement, (WOSM) in cooperation with UNICEF, have developed the "help children grow" programme. Scouts and Guides help the children in their communities by: learning and sharing information about child health, immunization and breastfeeding; teaching mothers the techniques for growth monitoring and oral rehydration; working with the community on food production, clean water, sanitation, housing and literacy.
- The African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) gives small grants to indigenous African organizations for developing innovative ideas related to basic education for health.
- The Christian Medical Commission has facilitated exchange of experience and published practical suggestions for groups developing their own health education manuals.
- UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO, in partnership with 104 international non-governmental organizations, have launched a communications project known as FACTS FOR LIFE. It provides material that all communicators can use to spread knowledge about practical, low-cost, family-based ways of promoting child health.

  FACTS FOR LIFE is a contribution to primary health care and reflects two of its most fundamental principles: 1) that there is a need to demystify health care and make today's health knowledge available to all families, 2) that health is not the responsibility of the medical profession alone but of society as a whole.

"Poor health and growth is a cause as well as a symptom of poverty. Protecting the normal development of children is therefore also a long-term contribution to the overall struggle against poverty."

—FACTS FOR LIFE leaflet

"It is easier to put a man on the moon than to change a school curriculum."

As for health education in the formal school system, one educator tells of his long struggle to bring the realms of education and health closer together, the difficulty in just getting people from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to sit down together and talk. *"It is easier to put a man on the moon"*, he concludes, *"than to change a school curriculum."*

Nevertheless, change has come. Ten years ago health was not regarded as a very important part of the formal school curriculum: it was often squeezed into crowded class schedules or taught by inadequately prepared teachers. Now, with PHC, AIDS, and economic recession affecting both health and education, people have been rethinking the matter. The motivation to combine forces is stronger, and health concepts are being built into the core curriculum.

Child health in the 1980s

The conflicting forces affecting children are nowhere more apparent than in the field of health. Primary health care is progressing, although slowly and sometimes painfully, as one might expect with such a fundamental change in approach. The achievements in immunization and ORT demonstrate what can be accomplished "with unity of purpose".

Yet the counter currents are strong: the disturbing decline in health indicators in some places due to economic reverses, the persistence of the extreme poverty that breeds so many health problems, the terrible consequences for child health of war and political instability. All of these make one appreciate how fragile progress can be.

Perhaps the firmest ground for optimism is the two-tier mobilization that has undoubtedly taken place in this decade and that could do much to safeguard children's health in the future: the mobilization of political will at the highest levels, and the "aroused communities" at the base. Somehow that unlikely, unorthodox mixture of people described in the opening paragraph of this chapter has to stay together and keep the vision they have of what should be done, what can be done and what will be done for children's health.

CHAPTER 9

Education

"If the enhancement of peoples' capacity to improve their own lives is the main aim and measure of development, then nothing could contribute more directly to its achievement than education and literacy."

—The State of the World's Children 1989[1]

The picture for education in the 1980s is similar to the picture for health: impressive achievements on the one hand, looming dangers on the other.

The achievements: looking at the developing countries as a whole, the proportion of children in school has doubled over the past 40 years, despite the fact that the number of school age children has also doubled. Even though such figures mask many disparities from one area to another, to have effected such an expansion of facilities and teaching personnel in so short a time, with all the other pressing needs in developing countries, reflects a real determination to give priority to children.

The total spent for education globally in 1986 was US$ 793 billion, of which 87% was spent in developed countries, 13% in developing countries, where more than three-fourths of the world's children live.

—International Bureau of Education, UNESCO[2]

Nevertheless, the counter currents of the '80s are strong: enrolment rates appear to be dropping in certain areas, and the percentage of children completing four years of school is low, especially for girls. (Four years is the minimum considered necessary for basic literacy and numeracy.) Reports that drop-out rates are rising come from many areas in both industrialized and developing countries. Children are paying with their futures for the socioeconomic, trade and adjustment policies of the present. Once more, children of the poorest families pay the highest price.[3]

One third of the children enrolled in primary school in the developing countries drop out of school before completing four years of school[4]

NGO action to safeguard children's right to education has taken the form of information campaigns, advocacy and lobbying of governments to give higher priority to the financing of education. Since the early 1980s the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession has warned against short-term expediencies and has spelled out the long-term consequences of cuts in education budgets. In 1983 the organization published a book on the subject entitled *Cuts Don't Heal*.

In the autumn of 1989 UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank will hold a conference on *"Basic Education for All"*. One of the problems in education, as funds become scarce, is that a disproportionate amount tends to go to secondary and higher education, which directly serve only 30% of the population or less in many countries. The conference will attempt to work out principles that will make basic education available to all, just as primary health care is designed to ensure "health for all".

Pre-School Education

The 1980s have confirmed earlier evidence that pre-school education and early childhood stimulation programmes can be very important to children's later development, especially for children who live in "deprived" environments. Children who have had some kind of early stimulation are more likely to do well in school and less likely to drop out. In some countries at least they are less likely to be among the unemployed later. However, pre-school education is often not available through the regular school system, or not available to the children who need it most.

NGO programmes set up to fill the gap typically draw on the resources of the community to build or equip a simple pre-school centre, to choose people for training and to run the centre. Pre-school programmes have sometimes been the entry point for further self-help and community development efforts. This is especially true where having the children well looked after for a part of the day gives mothers or older sisters the opportunity to do and learn other things.

A pre-school at Lugel, a village in Burkina Faso, grew out of an IYC project where village parents came together to help their children make toys. Afterwards they kept on meeting and working for many months to plan, build, and equip a modest pre-school centre, find funds for a teacher and choose women to be trained as assistants.

By the time their pre-school opened it had become the centre of community life and the driving force of community development. Out of the new spirit generated by their successful struggle, many subsequent changes have come. The village now has a new well, health check-ups for mothers and children, a mill for grinding flour, and at last, their own primary school. It became unthinkable for the "graduates" of the pre-school not to continue their education.[5]

Many NGO pre-school programmes are in the poorer urban areas where young children are greatly in need of adult companionship and stimulation. One interviewee told of working with families in a *favela* of Latin America. Fathers were often absent and many mothers worked all day as domestics in other parts of the city. There were 4-year-olds who could not talk and some who could not walk from being left alone all day, enclosed in a "safe place" while the parents were away.

Sometimes it is hard for parents (and government authorities) to understand young children's need for play, stimulation, and just being talked to. In places where children are dying and there are not enough places in primary schools, people feel they have other priorities.

Elsewhere, according to some interviewees, well meaning parents and education authorities turn pre-schools into high-pressure antechambers to the regular school system. The young child's need for free play is forgotten as formal academic subjects are introduced earlier and earlier so the children can be one step ahead when they get to primary school. The theme of "lost childhood" runs through these interviews just as it did in interviews about child labour or street children.

Education for girls

The decade has brought an increase in the proportion of girls in school, but not nearly enough. Education is important for girls in their own right because of the difference it makes in their present and future lives. It is also critical, as many studies have shown, for the health and well-being of their future children.

It is disappointing therefore to find, at the end of this decade, that nearly 40% of the young girls of primary school age in Southern Asia and Africa are not attending school. Globally, one-fourth of school age girls are not in school, compared to one-seventh of the boys.[6]

When 4-year-old Rama, the youngest of several brothers, started attending a YWCA day care centre in Pudupenagar, India, his older sister Geetha was at last free to return to school. She had left at the age of 8 to care for her younger brothers while her parents worked.

Too embarrassed to go back to a primary school at her age, she joined a YWCA club for women and girls. There she was able to learn basic literacy skills. She also became adept at certain handicrafts and now earns a good living selling the dresses and bags she makes.[7]

A variety of local and national NGOs, especially women's associations, have been instrumental in promoting education for girls and in finding out and doing something about the causes for girls' non-enrolment or early dropping out. Sometimes it means having a separate school for girls only, or demonstrating to parents the value of educating girls, or having classes at the hours when girls are not needed at home. Early pregnancy cuts short the academic career of many young women, and NGOs have been leaders in developing programmes to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies or to enable young mothers to continue their education.

Development Education

Development education, one of the most fruitful partnerships between NGOs and the UN system in the 1980s, has addressed many of the issues mentioned in this report. It is surely responsible in part for the greater public awareness of children's problems and the underlying causes.

At the beginning of the decade the JUNIC/NGO Working Group on Development Education (JUNIC = Joint United Nations Information Committee) set up a Sub-Group on Women and Development. It brought together people from five UN agencies and six NGOs. They set themselves the task of producing kits of materials that would be suitable for adaptation and use by development groups at the grass roots level, i.e. material that could be used to stimulate local discussion and action. The kits, as it turns out, have been used in unexpected ways—in school rooms and adult education classes as well as by NGO branches and community groups.

"it's been very educational for the UN system."

The titles in the series include *Women and Disability; Women, Health and Development; Women's Role in Social and Economic Development; Women and Shelter.* Throughout the series the relationships between women and children's well-being are strongly underlined. Today 12 UN agencies and 20 - 25 NGOs carry on this work. Several bilateral initiatives involving one agency and a few NGOs have been off-shoots of the Sub-Group. One UN officer finds that *"it's been very educational for the UN system."*

Development education has also been a priority for a number of National Committees for UNICEF. Here the linkage with children is two-fold: to sensitize the adult public to the condition of children in various parts of the world, and to carry out development education activities with children.

In Switzerland artists from developing countries tour Swiss schools and teach children about the culture, traditions and ways of life in their countries. The Swiss Committee for UNICEF has a pilot programme that aims at the better integration of foreign children living in Switzerland. In April 1989 there will be a weekend dedicated to playing and learning together, with the Rights of the Child in Switzerland as the general theme of the event.

"Children know that the world is one."

—From an interview

In the United States several NGOs that have operational programmes benefitting children (CARE, Oxfam America, Save the Children) have joined forces with the Hunger Project and the U.S. National Committee for UNICEF in two development education programmes involving U.S. school children: *"Alive at Five"* and *"Balloons for Child Survival"*. The schools work as partners with one of the NGOs, learning about global interdependence, community development efforts and child survival.

Education programmes for special groups of children

Groups of children whose needs are not adequately met by the regular school system often benefit from educational programmes developed by NGOs. Many children with disabilities, if their need for special education is met at all, owe it to programmes started by NGOs. Parents' groups frequently stimulate the demand for such programmes.

NGO educational programmes target other specific groups of children, as in these examples:

- The children of gypsies or "travellers" in Europe have seen their chances of successfully completing school increase (without having to give up their traditions) because of consultations between European education authorities and representatives of the Romani Union.
- Volunteers in the A.T.D. Fourth World Movement set up "street libraries" for children in poor urban neighbourhoods and rural areas. The volunteers bring books and writing and art materials and set up the "library" wherever children gather—in the fields, in the alleyways of crowded Third World cities, or in the lobbies of "welfare hotels". The children come and go as they please. They read, look at pictures, listen to stories or create their own, self-illustrated stories. Sometimes the stories are gathered into a home-made book. Where it is possible and appropriate, computers are taken along, so that the children of poor families can gain some experience in modern technology just as their more affluent compatriots do.

"No one ever comes here. No one!" said eight-year-old Robert, welcoming volunteers from the A.T.D. Fourth World Movement to the run-down neighbourhood where he lives.[8]

- In South Africa the South African Council of World Affiliated YWCA studied the results of the Bantu Education Act on black youth after a generation. They found: under-qualified teachers with limited content and language facility, grossly inadequate expenditure per pupil, reluctance to assimilate information outside the prescribed school curriculum. Many black students have become so disillusioned by Bantu education that they boycott the schools. The YWCA is studying an alternative education project that will help meet the educational needs of young black South Africans, prepare black youth for leadership in a post-apartheid society, reduce violence in the schools and foster an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Education for current and future responsibilities

NGOs act to help young people prepare for some of the major issues they must deal with today and tomorrow:

- The International Schools Association has developed an International Curriculum for the Middle Years of Schooling (age 11 - 16). It stresses global interdependence, "interculturality" and an interdisciplinary approach across all the segments of the curriculum. The segment on Health and Social Education links health (in the broadest sense) to life-styles, family life, interpersonal relationships, sexuality, cultural factors, environment, and consumer aspects.

- How can young people be better prepared for their roles as parents? That was the question behind the formation in the early 1980s of an Informal Working Group on Family Life Education. It included people from UN agencies concerned with children and youth, and a number of NGOs with large youth memberships. As a contribution to International Youth Year, 1985, the Group pooled their experience in a document entitled *Growing Up in a Changing World: Youth Organizations and Family Life Education*. The International Planned Parenthood Federation distributed the document. Many other NGOs have extensive programmes in parent education and family life education carried out through their local branches.

Education in the '80s

After the rapid expansion of education in earlier years, it is worrisome to see primary school enrolments declining in some places, to see drop-out rates rising and the quality of education threatened. It is clear that much more needs to be done to make sure that girls are educated.

Nevertheless, the contributors to this study seemed to agree that education is more valued now by parents generally than it was ten years ago and that they are likely to continue putting pressure on governments for more and better schools. People spoke of a certain momentum being built up as larger numbers of adults with some education want even more for their children.

One interviewee, commenting on priorities for the next decade, underscored the need for education in the arts and humanities as well as technology. She remarked that, *"all over the world societies are becoming more multi-cultural. How are we going to deal with that? It's either going to be very beneficial or it will lead to constant hostility. A lot depends on the schools."*

CHAPTER 10

Participation of Children

"If you let yourself be guided by the way children look at development, it actually does change your attitude toward programme planning."

—From an interview

As the International Year of the Child approached, the NGO/IYC Committee issued a document entitled Participation of Children in the International Year of the Child. *In the opening paragraph it said that children's participation in IYC would be one of the touchstones by which the Year would be judged.*

Applying that same touchstone to the decade that has followed, a decade of discussion of children's rights, to what extent are children now able to "participate" and how do we define "participation"?

The majority of the world's children have always participated of course in the world of work, whether as paid labourers, or helping out in the home and on the farm, or taking care of younger sisters and brothers. Far fewer have participated in decision-making or been able to make their voices heard on the major issues of society. Is that changing?

One new or accentuated element for children in this decade is their participation in the broad social mobilization that was described in earlier chapters. This report speaks of social mobilization specifically in terms of working for children, but it is a broader phenomenon, too, that can be seen in such areas as community health and general socioeconomic development. Children and young people are increasingly a part of that social mobilization. In many places they are full-fledged, energetic partners, working on health, sanitation or education projects, debating important social issues along with the rest of the community, and their unique contribution is recognized.

Other signs of increased participation of children were discussed earlier in this report—the self-help projects and organizing efforts of street children and child labourers, the greater participation of refugee children in decisions affecting their future, the laws requiring that children's views be taken into account in custody cases and arrangements for care, the lowering of the voting age in some countries.

"Children are their own best advocates. Why does that scare us?"

—From an interview

It is hard to know what this adds up to globally, but certainly the decade provides considerable evidence that children and youth are being taken more seriously as people with their own views, rights and responsibilities. They are no longer seen as "objects" for whom we do something, but as active agents of change in their own lives and in the community.

Many NGOs—notably youth organizations—have had that vision of children and youth for a long time, born out of their experience of

Children are a community resource not to be overlooked.

what children can do. One NGO, fairly new on the scene, was founded on the notion that children could play a much broader role in society...

The Child-to-Child movement

The Child-to-Child movement started in 1978 at the Institute of Child Health and the Institue of Education in London. The catalyst for its launching was the announcement of the IYC. The idea grew in part out of the primary health care movement and the recognition that children are a community resource not to be overlooked.

Why could children not be agents of PHC? They were already providing much of the child care. Child-to-Child was a call to recognize what children were doing for each other and the community and to help them do it better.

Key health messages that children could understand, apply and spread were formulated on "activity sheets". These simple sheets spread around the world with amazing rapidity during the next few years. They were also put together in a book.

In close cooperation with the London Child-to-Child office, a francophone Child-to-Child network was founded in 1984 to reach out more effectively in French-speaking countries. It has an office in Paris and draws on the resources of the Institute of Health and Development in Paris, the Centre for Research in Education and Health in Liège (Belgium), ICCB and a network of African partners. A number of French- and English-speaking workshops have been held so that people using the Child-to-Child materials can add to and take from the Child-to-Child "bag of ideas".

After ten years of operation these trends have been observed in the movement:

- A widening of the concept from sibling care to "child power".
- Varied styles of operation. It is an approach rather than a programme. The materials have been used for many purposes, some of them far from the minds of the people who developed them—for adult literacy classes, for nurses training, and on the children's page of a newspaper.
- The educational nature of Child-to-Child is more in evidence. Although conceived as a health activity to be used mostly outside schools, its activities are now often concentrated in schools, within the formal education system.
- There is a tendency for plans and activities to grow from the original concept of using child power in primary health care to child power in relation to education and development. In these areas, too, children are a resource not to be wasted.[1]

"It's clear that in computers children quite often forge ahead of their teachers and parents and even the experts. Can't this talent be used more?"

—From an interview

The Child-to-Child movement in the 1980s has effectively brought together the three important domains discussed in the last three chapters: health, education and the participation of children. The power of this combination has been recognized in several countries of east and southern Africa, where a Child-to-Child approach, with UNICEF support, has been built into the formal school system, and children are actively involved in the promotion and provision of health care in schools and homes.

"The Child-to-Child movement emphasizes children's right to participate, but also the right to have a good time, to have fun. None of these ideas would work if they weren't fun."

Asked about people's understanding of children's right to participate, a Child-to-Child staff member observed:

"This has gone round in a cycle. In traditional societies it was usual for a child to participate with all the rest of society...in work, in child care, whatever they could do. But not in decision-making. Then that was overlaid a bit with new styles of life, education and government, where children were kept apart. Now in a sense it is coming back full circle to more participation."

Putting children's strengths to work in the community

Children's contributions to their communities frequently occur in association with organized youth movements. There are many such organizations—CIMEA, Falcons, Pioneers, Scouts, Guides and a host of other—and they are rightly proud of their record in promoting the participation of young people in the important work of our times, whether it be development, peace, environment or other issues.

The files of any of these organizations could provide interesting examples of the new activism of children. The ones described below come from IMAC (International Movement of the Apostolate of Children):

- In France children wrote letters to presidential candidates expressing their opinions on national issues.
- In Quebec a group of children began to discuss their reactions to the increasing number of pornography and sex shops appearing in their neighbourhood. They presented their views to an official commission that was investigating the problem.
- In Brazil the "United children of Marcaçao" decided to take action on a community problem that they had observed: when the village people were made to pay a fee for water from the well, they saw that for some of the poorest and the elderly this was a terrible hardship. These people had to stop buying bread to pay for water. The children got signatures on a petition and took it to the appropriate official, whose office was some miles away in another village. Over a period of several weeks, and with much persistence and ingenuity, they learned how to stand up for their rights, and how to deal with an off-putting bureaucracy. In the end they got free water for the villagers.

"Children are going to be involved and managing their own destiny. If we can have 10-year-old soldiers and 8-year-old workers...they will have some say in their own destiny. We have seen some fences knocked down in this decade."

—From an interview

A trend without counter-trend?

While it is hard to assess the quantitative or geographic extent of the trend toward greater participation of children, it does appear to be growing steadily and to be gaining recognition. The part that children have played in social mobilization during this decade is particularly significant—both for the children themselves and for their communities.

For once in this decade, there is a positive trend for children that does not seem to be greatly threatened by a counter-trend. There is, to be sure, a certain resistance to full participation and to the idea of "child power", but the evidence of children's substantial contribution to the community is there, and it is increasingly hard to deny.

CHAPTER 11 The Bottom Line

"This has been a harsh decade."

—Julius Nyerere [1]

For children, too, it has been a harsh decade, but one with flashes of hope. There has been intense NGO and UN action in their behalf, perhaps more than in any previous ten year period. If one were doing a balance sheet for the decade, how would it all add up?

The people contributing to this study were asked to name the events or developments of the last decade that, in their opinion, have had the greatest impact on children—positive or negative. A synthesis of their replies is presented here.

First, some of the pluses...

Awareness of children's rights and needs

There is near unanimity on one point: awareness of the rights and needs of children has increased a hundredfold over the past ten years. To many, this is by far the most important development for children in this decade.

Newspapers like *Le Monde diplomatique* (France) have run series of articles on children. Periodicals devoted to children are read with enthusiasm all around the globe, including the NGO Committee on UNICEF's *Action for Children*. The Minority Rights Group has done a special report on children's rights. Countless television and radio programmes have analysed children's issues. There are discussion groups and courses for parents. There is an encouraging universality in this new knowledge and concern—*The Muslim*, a newspaper in Pakistan, recently carried a long article and commentary on street children in Guatemala.

"You would have to have been in a time capsule someplace not to know more about children now than you did ten years ago."

Along with greater awareness has come greater respect for children and their abilities, according to some respondents. The part children have played in social mobilization and community development is a factor. Even so, respondents are divided as to how much adult attitudes toward children have actually changed in the average home or classroom.

Some interviewees contest the statement that children are treated with more respect today than ten years ago. Just the opposite, they contend, pointing to the many children whose human rights and dignity are totally ignored in the violence, exploitation and deprivation of the present era.

A positive sign, nevertheless, according to a number of respondents, is the growing perception of children's problems as human rights issues and the apparent readiness of the international community of nations to adopt the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This represents a formal commitment to children that seemed only a distant possibility just ten years ago.

Increased awareness has led to a more comprehensive or "holistic" approach to children, as demonstrated in many of the NGO programmes mentioned earlier. However, some respondents believe there is still need for more attention to the non-material needs of children.

Mobilization of political will

Children have definitely gained ground in terms of the level of debate where their problems are discussed. And there is greater appreciation of children as a key factor in the development equation. To several interviewees, this is the most significant achievement of the decade. *"We're finally talking about children at the level where decisions are made."*

Thanks mainly to UNICEF, top political leaders have been sensitized to the needs of children. The Organization for African Unity has adopted a plan of action to improve the situation of African children; the Association of South East Asian Nations and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation have taken similar action for Asian children. Building on that momentum, it is suggested in the 1989 *State of the World's Children* report that heads of State should gather for a Summit on Children.

"We're finally talking about children at the level where decisions are made."

At the same time, as noted earlier, there has been a far-reaching mobilization of society in behalf of children. It involves grass roots movements, religious groups, women's groups, nurses, business men and women, children and youth themselves, and many others. So at both the top decision-making level and the mass movement level there is a new consciousness of children. Some take this one step further. They think that the past decade has demonstrated to people that they can make a difference for children and that there is a new feeling of responsibility and determination to act.

Women and children

A number of people in the study stated that the most decisive factor for children is the changing status of women and their involvement in development programming. Most expect these changes to be very positive for children and decry the idea that there is any contradiction or competition between gains for women and gains for children. Several respondents pointed out, however, that many fundamental challenges remain—starting with safe motherhood and increased literacy for women, changes that will have an enormous impact on the well-being of children as well as women.

Health and education

Many say flatly that children's future well-being depends on what happens in these two fields. People are very aware of the way children have benefited from the techniques of oral rehydration therapy and immunization, breastfeeding and growth monitoring. For many respondents, the goals in health have broadened. Those four interventions, along with primary health care, health education and community-based rehabilitation of disabled children point to a brighter future for millions of children. The decade is notable both for what has been achieved in child health, and for the glimpse of what is possible.

In the field of education, people appreciate the accomplishments of the past few decades in sheer numbers of children enrolled in

school. Nevertheless, many feel that insufficient attention is being given to an impending crisis in education, a crisis that is partly due to reduced funding and partly due to educational policies that are not keeping up with the challenge of growing population and surging demand for education.

Thus, even as people rejoice in the achievements in children's rights, child health and education, they are apprehensive about the array of factors that could undermine those achievements. It is time to look at the minuses....

Threats to progress for children

Two factors were always mentioned first when people thought about developments that have had a negative impact on children this past decade:

- war, violence and instability
- poverty, economic decline, the debt problem

Children pay an intolerably high price for the world's failure to find ways to end war and violence. The last months offer some hope that a few major conflicts will cease. If they do, said one respondent, that will be the best news of the decade for children. Still, violence that is not connected with war threatens and preoccupies millions of children, whether it is violence in the streets, in schools and playgrounds or in their homes.

People in the sample used a variety of words to describe the other major negative element for children in this decade: poverty, underdevelopment, economic depression, debt problems. The common denominator is a lack of resources available for children's basic needs. Lack of income at the family level or cuts in social sector spending at the national level soon affect children's nutrition, health, education and future prospects. Most of the people in the study welcomed the 1989 *State of the World's Children* report, which addresses this subject.

Respondents named rapid population growth and environmental deterioration as additional factors that threaten the well-being of children and perhaps contribute to poverty and war. Also weighing heavily on the negative side of the balance sheet for the decade are substance abuse, AIDS, and all the child-related human rights abuses described earlier, along with trafficking in children, abduction, and many other topics that could not be covered here.

Family—pluses and minuses

Nearly everything that happens to a child, good or bad, passes by the family. The violent disruptions of war and conflict can be mitigated for a child if his or her family remains intact. Conversely, an abundance of material goods and physical security mean little to a child who lacks love and attention or feels the strain of a fragmented family.

This is no doubt why many of the contributors to this study feel ill at ease about what is happening to families. They do not predict the imminent demise of the family; they insist on the often unrecognized strengths that most families show in time of trouble. Yet they are aware of serious strains on family life during this last decade.

People from developing countries mention particularly:

- Poverty and unemployment that lead to the splitting up of families (as seen in street children or families of migrant labourers).
- Reduced spending in the social sector that makes it difficult for families to do what they would like to do for their children's health and education.
- War and violence that take the lives of parents and siblings, expose children to physical and psychological trauma and disrupt family life entirely as whole populations become refugees or displaced persons.
- The undermining of the extended family network (as in urban migration).

"Kids are losing out on childhood—it all goes too fast."

—From an interview

Many of those concerns apply to families in industrialized countries, too. Quite a few of the people in the study who come from industrialized societies think that children there are not as well off now as they were ten years ago. In spite of all the awareness, their needs are not given priority in these societies. People are concerned about:

- Children who do not get enough love, respect or attention in their families, for any of a number of reasons.
- Children growing up too fast, hastened into adult modes of behaviour, dress, consumerism and—inevitably?—disillusionment.
- A "moral crisis", "lack of standards or values", "children stunted in their moral and spiritual development". Respondents had difficulty finding a sufficiently objective formulation for this, but the persistence of such a theme in the setting of an NGO/UN study shows that people feel strongly about it.

Other items on the balance sheet

There were many other topics raised that should enter into the balance sheet of the decade. To mention them so briefly here does an injustice to the thoughtful, nuanced way they were presented in interviews and letters, but the following will give some indication of what is on people's minds when they look back on children in the 1980s:

- **Regional differences.** Many contributors mentioned that in general the situation of children in Asia has improved more rapidly than the situation of children in Africa, reflecting in part the different rate of economic growth and the effects of natural disasters. Such differences, and the reasons for them, could not be adequately covered in this report, but they are important and respondents think we should learn from them. On the other hand, more than one interviewee finds that there is a growing similarity between the problems of children in the Third World and the problems of children in industrialized countries.
- **Communications technology and the media.** The revolution in communications technology is seen as a development that will have far-reaching effects on children. The power and influence of the media (TV, radio, videos, discs) are indisputable. Will they be used in ways that have a positive impact on children and

families, or in ways that create anxiety and bring out the worst in people? *"NGOs should be doing more to educate the media and help them become more responsible toward children...and adults!"*

- **Priority to the poorest.** *"We haven't begun to solve the problem of reaching the poorest. This is obvious in health, education, juvenile justice—almost any field you can name. This should be the priority for the next decade."*
- **Water.** *"Water could be the key to the state of children's health if you look again in ten years. During the 1980s the emphasis was on reducing mortality, but to reduce morbidity we need to move faster on water and sanitation."*
- **Drugs.** *"We have allowed the drug problem to reach unmanageable proportions. We need 'UN blue helmets' for the struggle against drugs now."*
- **Organizations.** There were several comments about the growth of local groups and NGOs in developing countries. This is a positive factor. Many of them give a high priority to children.

  However, local groups have difficulty in making their voices heard nationally and in coping with the bureaucracy that surrounds most sources of funding. A major challenge for the international community of NGOs and UN agencies is to see how local action for children can best be supported. It is at the local level, after all, where "action for children" is translated into change in children's lives.

The bottom line

It is now ten years since the International Year of the Child, ten years of intense NGO and UN action in behalf of children. It has been an era of unparalleled local initiatives for children and by children.

There are many pluses—in awareness, in standard setting, in the results achieved, and in the processes that have been elaborated to make action for children more effective.

But there are many minuses, too, on the balance sheet—the harshness of the decade from a socioeconomic viewpoint, and the magnitude of children's still unmet needs (many of them the same as in 1979). The list of children's problems is, as mentioned in the Preface, intolerably long. It is also, as a result of the work of this decade, considerably broadened.

"The problem is: our norms grow quicker than our real progress. This is positive, but painful."

Perhaps one of the problems in taking stock of the ten years since IYC is that it has been a decade of "rising expectations" for children. We have a new definition of what is "intolerable". One contributor puts it well: *"The fact that we can even think now in terms of avoiding catastrophes (famine, exploitation of children...) indicates a huge progress.... I think it is a monument* [to the advancement of civilization] *that we have pushed back mortality, that we can feed, clothe, house and teach great numbers of children. The problem is: our norms grow quicker than our real progress. This is positive, but painful."*

Yes, the bottom line on the decade is positive. But it is positive *only if* it is painful...painful enough to spur us on with even greater urgency in our action for children in the 1990s. ♦

List of people interviewed

Beatriz Ahiaba—Indian Council of South America, World Council of Indigenous People

Assefa Bequele—International Labour Office

Helene Beyeler—International Movement A.T.D. Fourth World

Neil Brenden—National Council for International Health, USA

Florence Bruce—International Catholic Child Bureau

David Burleson—UNESCO representative at UNICEF

Nigel Cantwell—Defence for Children International

Kathleen Cravero—UNICEF, New York

Cyril Dalais—UNICEF, Beijing Office

Robert Davis—UCI, UNICEF, New York

Clara Diaz-Sanchez—UNICEF, Geneva

Amelia Dozzi—Soroptomist International and NGO Committee on Narcotics and Substance Abuse

Fe Josefina Dy—International Labour Office

Lizette Echols—CARE, New York

Marie-Paule Eisele—International Catholic Child Bureau, Paris

Simone Ek—Rädda Barnen International, Sub-Group on Refugee Children and Adolescents

Meg Gardinier—International Catholic Child Bureau, New York

Jack Glattbach—UNICEF, Bangkok Office

Beth Gregg—U.S. Committee for UNICEF

Gulbadan Habibi—Rehabilitation International/UNICEF Technical Support Programme

Susan Hammerman—Rehabilitation International

Shepard Harder—Save the Children Alliance

Robert Harris—World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession; ex-President, Standing Committee of NGOs at UNESCO

Rosalind Harris—International Social Service; ex-Chairperson, CONGO; NGO Committee on UNICEF

Hugh Hawes—Child-to-Child Movement

Mary Ruth Horner—CARE, New York

Michael Jupp, Kay Castelle and Dennis Nurkse—Defence for Children International-USA

Kate Katzki—International Council on Social Welfare and Council of International Programmes for Workers in Human Services

Anne Kechacha—World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

Johanna Koch—La Leche League

Margaret Kyenkya—UNICEF, New York

Bengt Lagerkvist, M.D.—Consultant, WHO

Sylvie Lambert—UNICEF, Geneva

Eva Larsson—Rädda Barnen

Marianne Leach—CARE, Washington

Leah Levin—Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights

Joseph Moerman—ex-President, NGO/IYC Committee; ex-President, NGO Committee on UNICEF

Odile Moreau—President, Standing Committee of NGOs at UNESCO

Allegra Morelli—UNICEF, New York

Audrey Moser—former Secretary General, International Social Service; former Chairperson, Sub-Group on Unaccompanied Refugee Children and Adolescents

Mim Neal—Rotary International

Marjorie Newman-Black—UNICEF, Geneva

Alex Palacios—U.S. Committee for UNICEF, Washington Office

Kathleen Peterson—UNICEF, New York

Susan Pettiss—International Agency for Prevention of Blindness; consultant to Helen Keller International

Dimza Pityana and international group of staff members (Sheila Barnet, Elsbeth Herzog, Doreen Boyd, Jacqueline Vofer, Anita Witschi, Juliarty Sahnine)—World Young Women's Christian Association

Mary Racelis—UNICEF, Nairobi

Cecile Reyes—Global Committee of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

Barbro Ries—Migration Secretariat, World Council of Churches

Michael Rigby—RESULTS, USA

Cyril Ritchie—International Schools Association, International Planned Parenthood Federation

Marilyn Rocky—CHILDHOPE, New York Office

François Ruegg—International Catholic Child Bureau

Pentti Ruutikainen—CIMEA (International Committee of Children's and Adolescents' Movements)

Kiesa Savolainen—UNESCO Division of Equal Educational Opportunity

Ian Scherer—Student, participant in IYC

Moses Seton, M.D.—Professor, University of Liberia and Head, Kennedy Medical Center, Monrovia

Victor Soler-Sala—UNICEF, New York

Robert Thomson—World Organization of the Scout Movement; Vice-President, NGO Committee on UNICEF

Lane Vanderslice—Bread for the World

Stefan Vanistendael—International Catholic Child Bureau

Jeanne Vickers—former Development Education Officer and NGO Liaison, UNICEF, Geneva

Susan B. Walker—Opération Handicap Internationale, Regional Office, Bangkok

Penny Whitworth—UNICEF, Geneva

John Williamson—Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ♦

List of Organizations providing Documentation

Non-governmental Organizations

Asian Cultural Forum on Development
Associated Country Women of the World
Association mondiale des Amis de l'Enfance
Bahá'í International Community
Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University
Bread for the World
CARD (Childhood Action, Research and Documentation Institute)
CARE (Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere)
Children's Defense Fund—USA
Children's Legal Centre—UK
CIMEA (International Committee of Children's and Adolescents' Movements)
Covenant House
Defence for Children International and DCI-USA
Foster Parents Plan International
Global Committee of Parliamentarians on Population and Development
Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society
IBFAN (International Baby Food Action Network)
International Association of Democratic Lawyers
International Association of Juvenile and Family Court Magistrates
International Board on Books for Young People
International Catholic Child Bureau
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
International Council of Voluntary Agencies
International Federation of Educative Communities
International Federation of Women in Legal Careers
International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap
International Movement A.T.D. Fourth World
International Movement of Apostolate of Children
International Planned Parenthood Federation
International Schools Association
International Social Service
International Union of Family Organisations
John Snow, Inc.
La Leche League
League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Muslim World League
National Council for International Health (USA)
Quaker United Nations Office
Rädda Barnen International
Rehabilitation International
RESULTS
Romani Union
Rotary International
Salvation Army
Save the Children Alliance
Save the Children—USA
Soroptimist International of Israel
Susila Dharma International
United Schools International
WIZO—Women's International Zionist Organisation
World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
World Blind Union
World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession
World Council of Churches—Migration and Refugee Service
World Leisure and Recreation Association
World Movement of Mothers
World Organization of the Scout Movement
World Young Women's Christian Association
Zonta International

NGO Committees

Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
NGO Committee on Development
NGO Committee on Narcotics and Substance Abuse

National Committees for UNICEF

Belgian Committee for UNICEF
Irish National Committee for UNICEF
Portuguese Committee for UNICEF
Swiss Committee for UNICEF
Turkish National Committee for UNICEF
UNICEF-UK
U.S. Committee for UNICEF

United Nations Organizations

International Labour Office
United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
World Health Organization

International Committee of the Red Cross

List of Acronyms

AIDS—Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ANPPCAN—African Network on Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect

CBR—Community-Based Rehabilitation

CSDR—Child Survival and Development Revolution

DCI—Defence for Children International

EPI—Expanded Programme on Immunization

GOBI—Growth monitoring, Oral rehydration therapy, Breastfeeding and Immunization

IBFAN—International Baby Food Action Network

ICCB—International Catholic Child Bureau

ICRC—International Committee of the Red Cross

ICVA—International Council of Voluntary Agencies

ILO—International Labour Office

ISPCAN—International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

IYC—International Year of the Child

IYDP—International Year of Disabled Persons

NGO—Non-governmental Organization

NGO/IYC Committee—Committee of NGOs for the International Year of the Child

ORT—Oral Rehydration Therapy

PHC—Primary Health Care

UCI—Universal Child Immunization

UN—United Nations

UNDP—United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO—United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR—United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF—United Nations Children's Fund

WHO—World Health Organization

Note: Acronyms used only once or twice are explained in the text as they occur.

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5. M.B. Kabre and H. Beyeler-Von Burg, *Children Lead the Way in Burkina Faso* (Joint publication of UNICEF-Ouagadougou and International Movement ATD Fourth World, 1987).

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Chapter 10—Participation of Children

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Chapter 11—The Bottom Line

1. Julius Nyerere, "Waiting Outside 'the Door to Prosperity'", *International Herald Tribune*, March 2, 1989. Mr. Nyerere, former President of Tanzania, wrote this article in his capacity as Chairman of the South Commission.

Note: when a quotation in the text is not otherwise identified it has come from one of the interviews conducted for this study.